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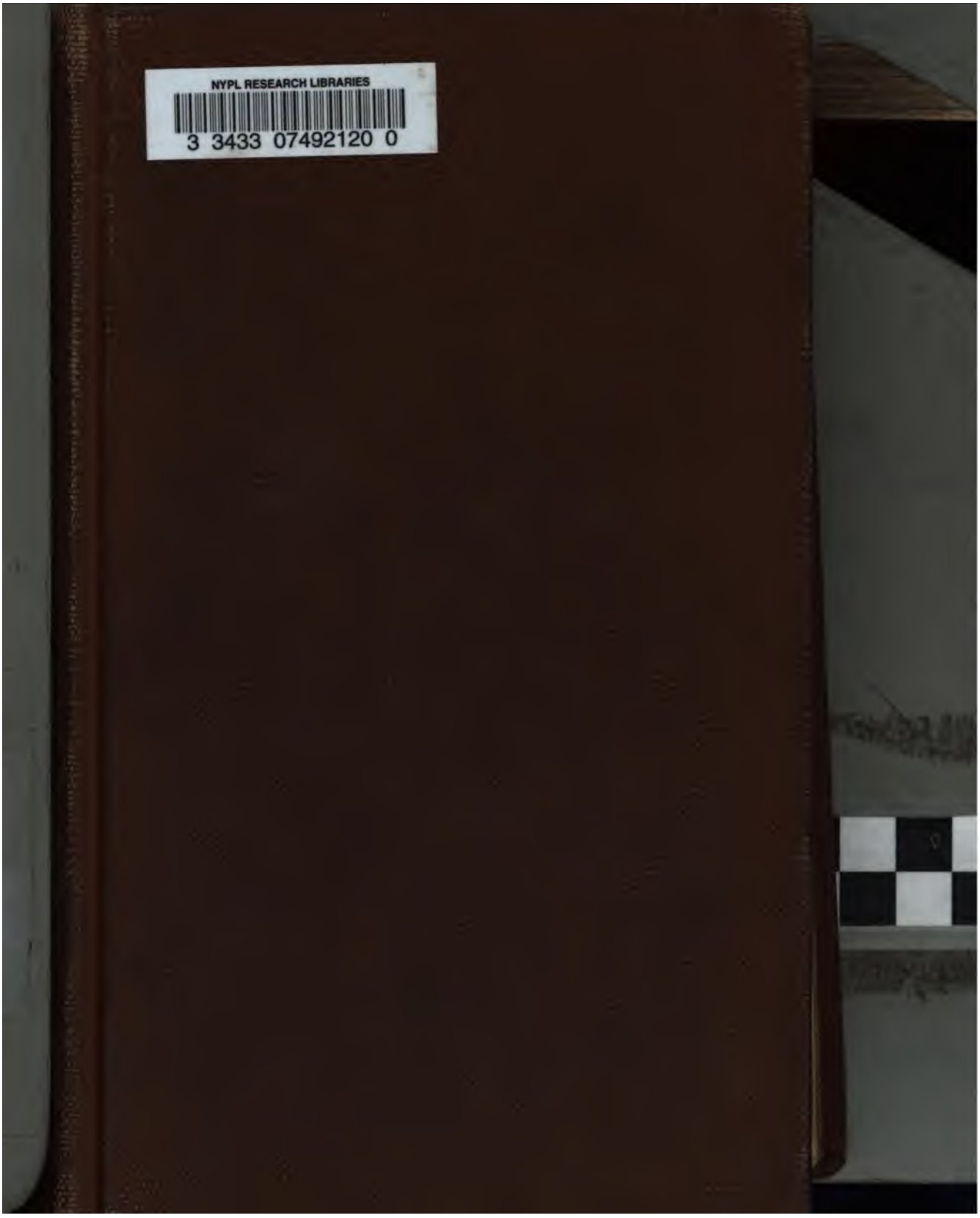
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IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

OF

LITERARY MEN AND STATESMEN

BY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, ESQ.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1826.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

TO

MAJOR-GENERAL STOPFORD,

ADJUTANT-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF COLUMBIA.

SIR,

THERE may be friends, I feel it, who have never seen each other. In the moment of losing, and perhaps for many years, one of my dearest relatives, I rejoice both in her marriage with you and in the time of it, which presents me the opportunity of adding to my congratulations the inscription of these dialogues.

There never was a period when public spirit was so feeble in England, or political

abilities so rare. Sordid selfishness and frivolous amusement, I will not say, are become the characteristics of our country, but, what is sufficiently calamitous and disgraceful, place it on a dead level with others. Rising far above and passing far away from them, you have aided in establishing one of those great republics, which sprang into existence at the voice of Bolivar, and enjoy for your exertions, in the noblest cause, the highest distinction any mortal can enjoy, his esteem and confidence.

You will find in these Conversations a great variety of subjects and of style. I have admitted a few little men, such as emperors and ministers of modern cut, to shew better the just proportions of the great; as a painter would station a beggar under a triumphal arch, or a camel against a pyramid. The sentiments most often inculcated are those which in themselves

are best; which, even in times disastrous as our own, produced an Epaminondas, a Pelopidas, and a Phocion: and in these, when genius lies flat and fruitless as the sea-sand, a Washington, a Kosciusko, and a Bolivar.

That government beyond a question is the most excellent, which has always been most esteemed by the best and wisest men, and which has produced them in the greatest number.

Exult in your glorious undertaking, and be assured that the work, and the satisfaction at completing it, will be durable.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

October 11, 1822.

THE PREFACE.

THE peculiarities of some celebrated authors, both in style and sentiment, have been imitated in these dialogues: but where they existed in times long past, to have retained their language would have been inelegant and injudicious. It was requisite to modify in a slight degree even that of so late a period as the reigns of Elizabeth and of James I; a period the most fertile of all in original and vigorous writers.

In the Conversation between Henry IV and Sir Arnold Savage, I have employed such a phraseology as the reader is in part accustomed to, whether from our earlier annalists or from our great dramatic poet.

This, by habitude, appears more certainly the language of the Plantagenets, than their own would do, copied faithfully, and is attended with no difficulty or disgust.

The only characters known little to the public, of whom no sufficient account is found in the Conversations themselves, are those of the Author, of Sir Arnold Savage, and of Walter Noble.

Sir Arnold Savage was Speaker of the Commons in the second year, and again in the fifth, of Henry IV: and his manly and dignified speech, addressed to that king, is recorded by Hakewil, by Elsynge, and others.

Walter Noble represented the city of Lichfield. He lived familiarly with the principal men of the age, remonstrated with Cromwel on his usurpation of power, and retired from public life on the punishment of Charles.

The memorial of their virtues, in these pages, is a legacy I hold in trust under them for the benefit of our descendents.

The reader will not be surprised at finding in the dialogues a great diversity of opinions. He is requested to attribute none of them to the author of the work, as proceeding from his conviction or persuasion, but to consider that they have risen and fallen in different periods and emergencies; and he is invited to turn to the more eminent writers of antiquity, where such are introduced, and to compare their sentiments with those before him. If, after all, he should experience an evil or unpleasant impression, let him throw aside first these volumes, as the lightest; then Cicero, Demosthenes, and every one else whose political notions, so discordant from those now prevalent, are represented in them; and strengthen his mind, and correct both his style and judgement, by a careful

perusal of the speeches which have happily come down to us, from the more enlightened and prudent leaders of our parliament, Mr. Pitt, Lord Castlereagh, and their successors, whose rank and influence have ensured to them the promises of immortality.

What is excellent in one government may not be advisable in another; and what is advisable in that other may not appear so to those who direct its affairs. Hence the ideas of Washington and Franklin are represented as very much at variance with the ideas of those statesmen in France, Britain, Prussia, Russia, who declare themselves much wiser, much more dispassionate, much more disinterested. Hence also the opinions of the ruder Spaniards are extremely unfavorable to a House of Peers, and somewhat irreverent to that of England. Here however it must be protested, that nothing of this irre-

verence should be attributed to the writer; whose business is to examine the most interesting and important questions, by the introduction of personages in some cases the most zealous and enthusiastic, in others the least prejudiced and preoccupied. This method presents occasionally somewhat like dramatic interest, and, where that is deficient or inadmissible, historical facts, biographical characteristics, critical disquisitions, philological observations, and philosophical truths or problems.

Above all things, the reader is exhorted to observe religiously our laws and customs, and to receive as curiosities, not as directions, the things, whatever they may be, which men educated in other countries and with other feelings, may, in the heat of discussion or in the unskilfulness of argument, oppose to them.

Wherever ground is dug for any purpose, there spring up plants of various

kinds, from that purpose altogether alien; most of them are thrown away, a few collected: thus I, occupying my mind in enquiries and speculations which may amuse my decline of life, and shew to others the features of the times in which we live and have been living, at one moment write for business, at another for relaxation, turn over many books, lay open many facts, and gather many fancies which I must relinquish on the road. Should health and peace of mind remain to me, and the enjoyment of a country, where, if there is none to assist, at least there is none to molest me, I hope to leave behind me completed the great object of my studies, an orderly and solid work in history, and I cherish the persuasion that Posterity will not confound me with the Coxes and Foxes of the age.

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

IN

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ERRATA.

P. 169, line 28, for "*summus*," read "*summis*."
— 170, — 3, read "no forger, *no* betrayer."
— 322, last line, after improvement, place a colon.
— 323, line 14, for "*requires*," read "*require*."
— 381, — 7, for "*By*," read "*But*."
— 385, — 8, for "*Thus*," read "*This*."
— 389, — 18, read "*horrentia*."

CONVERSATION I.

RICHARD I

AND

THE ABBOT OF BOXLEY.

RICHARD I

AND

THE ABBOT OF BOXLEY.

The abbot of Boxley was on his road to Haguenau in search of Richard, and the appearance of the church-tower in the horizon had begun to accelerate his pace, when he perceived a tall pilgrim at a distance, and observed him waving his staff toward some soldiers who would have advanced before him: they drew back.

"He may know something of Cœur de Lion," said the abbot, and again spurred his horse onward. In an instant he threw himself at the pilgrim's feet, who embraced him affectionately.

ABBOT.

O my king! my king! the champion of our faith at the mercy of a prince unworthy to hold his stirrup! the conqueror of Palestine led forth on foot! a captive! and to those he commanded and protected! Could Saladin see this...

RICHARD.

The only prince in the universe, who would draw his sword for me against the ruffian of Austria. He alone is worthy to rescue me, who hath proved himself worthy to fight me.

I might have foreseen this insult. What sentiment of magnanimity, of honour, of humanity, ever warmed an Austrian bosom?

Tell me, declare to me, abbot, speak it out at once... is this the worst of my misfortunes? Groans burst from me; they cleave my heart; my own English, I hear, have forsaken me: my brother John is preferred to me... I am lost indeed. What nation hath ever witnessed such a succession of brave monarchs, for two hundred years, as have reigned uninterruptedly in England? Example formed them, danger nurtured them, difficulty instructed them, peace and war, in an equal degree, were the supporters of their throne. If John succeed to me, which he never can by virtue, never shall by force, and I pray to God never may by fortune, what will remain to our country but the bitter recollection of her extinguished glory? I would not be regretted at so high a price. I would be better than the gone, presumptuous as is the hope; but may the coming be better than I! Abbot, I have given away thrones, but

never shall they be torn from me: rather than this, a king of England shall bend before an emperor of Germany*, but shall bend as an oak before the passing wind, only to rise up again in all his majesty and strength.

* Opinions have changed upon all things, and greatly upon titles and dignities. Who has not seen a consul appointed to reside in a fishing town? who has not given a shilling to a marquis, a sixpence to a knight? A Roman senator was often, both in moral worth and in landed property, beneath the level of an English gentleman; yet not only a Roman senator, but a Roman citizen, held himself superior to kings. Surely it might well be permitted our Richard to assume a rank above any potentate of his age. If almanacks and German court-calendars are to decide on dignities, the emperors of Morocco and Austria should precede the kings of England and Sweden and France: but learned men have thought otherwise. On this subject I shall transcribe a few sentences from Leonard Aretine.

Quid enim mea refert quemadmodum barbari loquantur, quos neque corrigere possum, si velim, neque magnopere velim si possim? De rege tamen et imperatore idem sentio quod tu, et jampridem ridens barbariem istam, hoc ipsum notavi atque redargui. Tres enim gradus majorum dignitatum apud Romanos, de quorum principe loquimur, fuere: rex, dictator, imperator. Ex his suprema omnium potestas rex est; post regem verò secundum tenuit dignitatis locum dictatura; post dictaturam imperium *tertio gradu* consequitur. Hujusce rei probatio est, quod Octaviano imperatori optime se gerenti Senatus Populusque Romanus dignitatem augere, pro imperatore dictatorem facere decrevit, quod ille non recepit, sed flexo genu recusavit, quasi majoris statûs majorisque invidiæ dig-

ABBOT.

God grant it! Abandoning a king like Richard, we abandon our fathers and children, our inherit-

nitatem existimans, Imperatoris nomen modicum ac populare, si ad Dictatoris fastigium comparetur. Majorem vero esse regiam potestatem quam dictaturam ex eo potest intelligi, quia Julius Cæsar, Dictator cum esset, affectavit Regem fieri. Epist. ix. lib. vi.

Many acute arguments follow. The dignity of a sovran does not depend on the title he possesses; for that he may with equal arrogance and indiscretion assume; but on the valour, the power, the wealth, the civilization of those he governs. This is a view of the subject which Aretine has not taken, and which undoubtedly Richard took. The proudest of titles is Protector. There is nothing in that of *emperor* or *king* which designates one or other to be greater than the body of the state; but what protects must be greater than what is protected.

Rank pretends to fix the value of every one, and is the most arbitrary of all things. Roman knights, corresponding for the greater part in condition with our wealthier yeomanry and inferior esquires, would have disdained to be considered as no better or more respectable than the kings they protected and subsidized. In our days, even an adventurer to whom a petty prince or his valet has given a pennyworth of ribbon, looks proudly and disdainfully on any one of us who has nothing else in his button-hole than the button.

Few authors are more sensible than Plutarch; and no remark of his appears to me more judicious than the following on Juba; at which however there is not a deputy-commissary or under-secretary who would not laugh heartily.

"His son, whose name also was Juba, was carried in triumph

ance and name. Far from us be for ever such ignominy! May the day when we become the second people upon earth, Almighty God! be the day of our utter extirpation!

RICHARD.

I yet am king, and more than ever so, who in this condition rule over hearts like thine.

Genii and angels move and repose on clouds; the same do monarchs, but on less compact ones, and hardly firm enough for a dream to pillow on. Visions of reluctant homage from crowned heads, and of enthusiastic love from those who keep them so, have passed away from me, and leave no vacancy. One thought commemorative of my country, and characteristic of my countrymen, is worth them all.

ABBOT.

Here are hardly, I reckon, more than threescore men; and, considering the character both of their prince and of their race, I cannot but believe that the scrip across my saddlebow contains a full receit for the discharge of my sovran. Certain I am that little is left unto him of the prize he made from the caravan of Egypt.

while yet a child: and truly most happy was his imprisonment, by which, barbarian as he was, he came to be numbered among the most learned writers."

RICHARD.

The gold and silver were distributed among my soldiers, for the only prizes worthy of me were Saladin and Jerusalem. I have no hesitation in esteeming Saladin not only above all the potentates now living, which of a truth is little, but, from what has been related to me, above all who have ever reigned; such is his wisdom, his courage, his courtesy, his fidelity; and I acknowledge, that if I had remained to conquer him, I would have restored to him the whole of his dominions, excepting Palestine. And the crown of Palestine which of the crusaders should wear? which among them could have worne it one twelvemonth? I would do nothing in vain; no, not even for glory. The Christian princes judged of me from their own worthlessness: Saladin judged of me from himself. To them he sent pearls and precious stones, to me figs and dates; and I resolved from that moment to contend with him and to love him. Look now toward the Holy Alliance. Philip swore upon the Evangelists to abstain from aggression in my absence. Collecting an army on the borders of Normandy, he protests that his measures are pacific, invokes heaven against usurpers, and invades the province. He would persuade me, no doubt, that a regiment of horse on the low grounds is a pre-

ventive of agues, and a body of archers on the hills a specific for a fever. Aye, abbot, and his bishops lead him forth and light him on: his nobility follows him with alacrity and applause. In the whole extent of France there is neither sword nor crozier unsullied by perjury. Where upon earth was there ever a people so ready to swear and to forswear, to fight and to fly? Equally enthusiastic in opposite causes, and embracing them without breathing betwixt, their enthusiasm is however always in proportion to their numbers. A Frenchman, like a herring, loses his course when he loses his company, and his very instinct (in truth he has little else) forsakes him. The bravest kings with him are those who cast down conscience the most readily, and those whose appetites are the most groveling are the best. As in the black-puddings of our countryfolk, if blood is wanting, it must be made out by fat*.

ABBOT.

Times ought to be very quiet, and nations very prosperous, when rulers are valued, like bears and porpoises, for their fur and grease.

* The reader will remember that the ancient fare of our kings differed from that of the commonality in plenteousness only. If Richard did not dress his own dinner, like Achilles, he knew at least the composition of the few plain dishes then in use.

RICHARD.

Saladin was defeated and Jerusalem would have fallen; but God will forgive me if, leaving his bones and sepulchre to his own care and protection, I chastise a disloyal rather than a loyal enemy.

ABBOT.

I wish my liege could have taken him prisoner, that he might have saved such a soul by infusing into it the true faith under baptism.

RICHARD.

Aye that indeed were well. Tunny-fish under oil, men under baptism, those alone of both creatures are worth a November melon. So said the bishop of Hermopolis, one day after dinner; and I wish he had not broken wind upon it, or at least could have kept awake awhile longer, to edify us more at large thereupon, the heads having been delivered, as you see, with such aptness and solemnity.

Saladin lives in a country where prophet comes after prophet, and each treads out the last vestige from the sand. I am afraid it would not hold.

ABBOT.

Better as it is then.

RICHARD.

There are many in foren parts, who cannot be brought to comprehend, how a sprinkle of water

should prepare a man's eternal happiness *, or the curtailment of a cuticle his eternal misery.

* If Richard had lived a few centuries later, he would surely have been less a freethinker than we hear he was. Fra Sebastiano di Giesu, a Portuguese Augustin monk, related to Pietro della Valle, that a Persian *male-witch* (stregone) taken in the fact of witchcraft, was asked whether he could eat the heart of a Portuguese captain, in the same manner as he had just eaten the heart of a cucumber; that is, merely by looking at it. He replied in the negative; for that the Franks had in the breast something like a corslet, of such hardness that no witchery could penetrate it; which, beyond doubt, says Pietro della Valle, can be nothing else than the virtue of baptism, the armour of faith, and the privilege of being sons of the Church. (Vol. II. chap. 13). This honest and entertaining traveler, a most zealous catholic, falls unwarily, in almost every letter, on some unlucky comparison between the idolatry of his native country and of those he visits. In the fifth of the second volume he says, "It appears to me that a great part of the worship paid to their idols, consists in nothing but music and singing, &c. to pass the time not only gaily but luxuriously, and in serving them as if they were living persons." In the same he speaks of the right reverend their fly-flappers as "making a wind and driving off the flies from the idols of the palanquin, or at least *offering them that obsequiousness in grandeur which we use toward the Pope, with fans made from the tails of white peacocks, when he comes forth in pontificals.* And there were not wanting about the idols many of their *religious*, or ministers of the temple, who accompany them, and particularly one who appeared head, or *archimandrite*, and many many torches (molte e molte) with whose splendour the

ABBOT.

Alas, my liege, society is froth above and dregs below, and we have hard work to keep the middle of it sweet and sound, to communicate right reason and to preserve right feelings. In voyages you may see too much, and learn too little. The winds and the waves throw about you their mutability and their turbulence. When we lose sight of home, we lose something else than that which schoolboys weep for.

RICHARD.

By the keenness of your eye, compassionate as it is, I discover, my good abbot, that you have watched and traced me from the beginning of my wanderings. Let me now tell my story.. to confession another time. I sailed along the realms of my family: on the right was England, on the left was France: little else could I discover than sterile eminences and extensive shoals. They fled behind me: so pass away generations; so shift, and sink, and die away affections. In the wide ocean I was little of a monarch: old men guided me,

moonless night was lighted up." Who would not imagine this description to have rather been made by an Hindoo in Rome, than by a Roman in India? The chief, indeed the only, difference is, that in the one country the night is illuminated by processions, in the other the sun.

boys instructed me; these taught me the names of my towns and harbours, those shewed me the extent of my dominions: one cloud that dissolved in one hour half covered them.

I debark in Sicily. I place my hand upon the throne of Tancred, and fix it. I sail again, and within a day or two I behold, as the sun is setting, the solitary majesty of Crete, mother of a religion, it is said, that lived two thousand years. Onward, and many bright specks bubble up along the blue Egean; islands, every one of which, if the songs and stories of the pilots are true, is the monument of a greater man than I am. I leave them afar off... and for whom? O abbot, to join creatures of less import than the sea-mews on their cliffs; men praying to be heard, and fearing to be understood, ambitious of another's power in the midst of penitence, avaricious of another's wealth under vows of poverty, and jealous of another's glory in the service of their God. Is this Christianity? and is Saladin to be damned if he despises it?

But before I joined my worthy brotherhood of the faith, I was tossed about, a few days, among the isles and islets, which in some places are so thickly set, one may almost call them sea-stars.

A sailor's story is worth little without a tempest. I had enough of one to save my credit at the fireside and in the bower.

The king or emperor of Cyprus * (I forget his title) threw into prison the crew of an English vessel wrecked on his coast; and, not contented with this inhumanity, forbade the princess of Navarre my spouse, and the queen of Sicily who attended her, to take refuge from the tempest in any of his ports. I conquered his island, with the loss, on my part, of a dinner, two men, and a bridle. He was brought before me. My emperor had an aversion to iron in every form. I adorned his imperial feet with a silver chain, and invited him to the festivities of my nuptials with Berengere, followed by her coronation as queen of Cyprus. We placed his daughter under the protection of Jane†, knowing her sweet temper and courtesy, and remembering that a lady of rank rises one step higher by misfortune. She hath exchanged the cares of a crown for the gaiety of a court, and I hope that what she lost as princess she will gain as woman. I intend to place her suitably in marriage, and her dowery shall be what my treasury is at the time.

ABBOT.

We have only to consider now what lies before us. Could not my liege have treated with the duke of Austria?

* Isaac the usurper of Cyprus styled himself emperor.

† Queen of Sicily.

RICHARD.

Yes, had he been more nearly my equal. I punished his neglect of discipline: it became in his power to indulge his revenge. Henry is mercenary in the same degree, but perhaps less perfidious, certainly less irritated and hostile. No potentate can forgive the superiority of England: none can forget that I treated him as a trooper and dependent, and that the features of my contempt were too broad for any mask, in all the rich wardrobe of dissimulation. Henry alone is capable of securing my return. I remember the fate of Robert; and if I am not presently in London, I may be in Cardiff. He spoke wisely who said, *There is no confidence in princes;* and he will speak not unwisely, who shall say, *There is none for them.*

Those who have abandoned me must ransom me: I myself will dictate the conditions, and they shall be such as no emperor of Germany can refuse *.

Come on with me.

* *Emperor* is the title usually given to the heads of the Germanic league: but in fact there never was an *emperor of Germany*. Adrien Valois, in a letter to Albert Portner, writes thus. Legi Conringii librum *de finibus Imperii Germanici*, cujus libri titulum jure quis arguat...nullum enim usquam

imperium Germanicum fuit unquam, nullum est hodieque; nec imperator, etiamsi in Germaniâ sedem habeat, Germanorum imperator est, sed, ut ipse se more majorum appellat, rex Germaniæ et Romanorum imperator. Here we see the *rex* is before the *imperator*: if in the patents of Charles the fifth it is otherwise, the reason is that the title of king is applied to the dominion of several states which his ancestors had acquired more recently. Valois proceeds, Si tamen Romanorum imperator vocari debet qui urbi Romæ non imperat, et ab episcopo ecclesiæ Romanæ, Romæ, ac senatûs populique Romani sententiâ, dudum desiit consecrari. This letter is not printed among the works of Valois or his brother, but is of unquestionable authenticity, and may be found entire in the Amœnitates Literariæ of Schelhorn, Tom. V. p. 542. Valois was a good scholar, but he errs in his latinity when he objects to the expression *imperium Germanicum*, for that expression would be correct whether Germany were governed by a king, an emperor, an aristocracy, or a democracy. The Roman state was just as much *imperium Romanum* under the consuls and tribunes as under Tiberius or Caligula. The justice of the remark made by Valois is proved by the patents of Charles V, which always began, Carolus V, divinâ favente clementiâ, Romanorum Imperator Augustus, *ac rex Germaniæ*, Hispaniarum, utriusque Siciliæ, Hierusalem, Hungariæ, &c. The present emperor of Austria formally laid down a title which never belonged to him: he and all his ministers were ignorant of this, and I doubt whether there was any statesman in all Europe who knew it.

CONVERSATION II.

THE LORD BROOKE

AND

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

THE LORD BROOKE

AND

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

BROOKE*.

I COME again unto the woods and unto the wilds of Penshurst, whither my heart and the friend of my heart have long invited me.

SIDNEY.

Welcome, welcome! And now, Greville, seat yourself under this oak; since, if you had hungered

* The lord Brooke introduced here is less generally known than the illustrious personage with whom he converses, and upon whose friendship he had the virtue and good sense to found his chief distinction. On his monument in St. Mary's at Warwick, written by himself, we read that he was the servant of Queen Elizabeth, the counsellor of King James, and the friend of Sir Philip Sidney. His style is rather stiff, but his sentiments are sound and manly, his reflections deep. The same family produced another eminent man, a true patriot, slain in the civil wars by a shot from Lichfield minster. Clarendon, without any ground for his assertion, says there is reason to believe that he would have abandoned his party and principles.

or thirsted from your journey, you would have renewed the alacrity of your old servants in the hall.

BROOKE.

In truth I did so; for no otherwise the good household would have it. The birds met me first, affrightened by the tossing up of caps, and I knew by these harbingers, who were coming. When my palfrey eyed them askance for their clamorousness, and shrank somewhat back, they quarreled with him almost before they saluted me, and asked him many pert questions. What a pleasant spot, Sidney, have you chosen here for meditation! a solitude is the audience-chamber of God... Few days, very few in our year, are like this: there is a fresh pleasure in every fresh posture of the limbs, in every turn the eye takes.

Youth, credulous of happiness, throw down
Upon this turf thy wallet, stored and swoln
With morrow-morns, bird-eggs, and bladders burst,
That tires thee with its wagging to and fro:
Thou too wouldst breathe more freely for it, Age,
Who lackest heart to laugh at life's deceit.

It sometimes requires a stout push, and sometimes a sudden resistence, in the wisest men, not to become for a moment the most foolish. What have I done! I have fairly challenged you, so much my master.

SIDNEY.

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And only the accomplishment of our purpose can permitt us again to sheathe it: for, the aggrandisement of our neighbour is nought of detriment to us; on the contrary, if we are honest and industrious, his wealth is ours. We have nothing to dread while our Laws are equitable and our impositions light: but children fly from mothers that strip and scourge them.

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While the young blossom starts to light,
And heaven looks down serenely bright
On Nature's graceful form;
While hills and vales and woods are gay,
And village voices all breathe May,
Who dreads the future storm?

2.

Where princes smile and senates bend,
What mortal e'er foresaw his end,
Or feared the frown of God?
Yet has the tempest swept them off,
And the opprest, with bitter scoff,
Their silent marble trod.

3.

To swell their pride, to quench their ire,
Did venerable Laws expire,
And sterner forms arise;
Faith in their presence veiled her head,
Patience and Charity were dead,
And Hope.. beyond the skies.

But away, away with politics: let not this city-stench infect our fresh country-air.

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To happiness then, and unhappiness, since we can discourse upon it without emotion. I know not, Philip, how it is, but certainly I have never been more tired with any reading than with dissertations upon happiness, which seems not only to elude inquiry, but to cast unmerciful loads of clay and sand, and husks and stubble, along the high-road of the inquirer. Theologians and moralists, and even sound philosophers, talk mostly in a drawling and dreaming way about it. He who said that virtue alone is happiness, would have spoken more truly in saying that virtue alone is misery, if *alone* means *singly;* for beyond a doubt the virtuous man meets with more opposites and opponents than any other, meets with more whose interests and views thwart his, and whose animosities are excited against him not only by the phantom of interest, but by envy. Virtue alone cannot rebuff them; nor can the virtuous man, if only virtuous, live under them, I will not say contentedly and happily, I will say, at all. Self-esteem, we hear, is the gift of virtue, the golden bough at which the gates of Elysium fly open: but alas! it is oftener, I am afraid, the portion of the strongminded, and

or thirsted from your journey, you would have renewed the alacrity of your old servants in the hall.

BROOKE.

In truth I did so; for no otherwise the good household would have it. The birds met me first, affrightened by the tossing up of caps, and I knew by these harbingers, who were coming. When my palfrey eyed them askance for their clamorousness, and shrank somewhat back, they quarreled with him almost before they saluted me, and asked him many pert questions. What a pleasant spot, Sidney, have you chosen here for meditation! a solitude is the audience-chamber of God... Few days, very few in our year, are like this: there is a fresh pleasure in every fresh posture of the limbs, in every turn the eye takes.

> Youth, credulous of happiness, throw down
> Upon this turf thy wallet, stored and swoln
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> That tires thee with its wagging to and fro:
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Religions, languages, races of men, rise up, flourish, decay; and just in the order I assign to them. O my friend! is it nothing to think that this hand of mine, over which an insect is creeping, and upon which another more loathsome one ere long will pasture, may hold forth to my fellow men, by resolution of heart in me and perseverance, those things which shall outlive the least perishable in the whole dominions of mortality? Creatures, of whom the best and weightiest part are the feathers in their caps, and of whom the

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even of the vain, than of the virtuous. By the constant exertion of our best energies, we can keep down many of the thorns along the path of life; but some will thwart us, whether we carry our book with us or walk without it, whether we cast our eyes upon earth or upon heaven. He who has given the best definition of most things, has given but an imperfect one here, informing us that a happy life is one without impediment to virtue*. A happy life is not made up of negatives. Exemption from one thing is not possession of another. Had I been among his hearers, and could have uttered my sentiments in the presence of so mighty a master, I would have told him that the definition is still unfound, like the thing.

A sound mind and sound body, which many think all-sufficient, are but receptacles for it. Happiness, like air and water, the other two great requisites of life, is composite, as those are. One kind of it suits one man, another kind another. The elevated mind takes in and breathes out again that which would be uncongenial to the baser, and the baser draws life and enjoyment from that which would be putridity to the loftier. Wise or unwise, who doubts for a moment that content-

* Aristoteles says in his *Ethics*, and repeats it in his *Polity*, εὐδαίμονα βίον εἶναι τὸν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἀνεμπόδιστον.

ment is the cause of happiness? Yet the inverse is true: we are contented because we are happy, and not happy because we are contented. Well regulated minds may be contented with a small portion of happiness; none can be happy with a small portion of content. In fact, hardly any thing which we receive for truth, is really and entirely so, let it appear as plain as it may, and let its appeal be not only to the understanding, but to the senses; for our words do not follow them exactly; and it is by words we receive truth and express it.

I do not wonder that in the cloud of opinions and of passions, (for where there are many of the one, there are usually some of the other) the clearer view of this subject should be intercepted: rather is it to be marveled at, that no plain reasoning creature should in his privacy have argued thus:

I am without the things which do not render those who possess them happier than I am: but I have those the absence of which would render me unhappy; and therefor the having of them should, if my heart is a sound one and my reason unperverted, render me content and blest! I have a house and garden of my own; I have competence; I have children. Take away any of these, and I should be sorrowful, I know not how long. Give

at receiving a wound; I never heard ours: shall the uneducated be worthy of setting an example to the lettered? If we see, as we have seen, young persons of some promise, but in comparison to us as the colt is to the courser, raised to trust and eminence by any powerful advocate, is it not enough to feel ourselves the stronger men, without exposing our limbs to the passenger, and begging him in proof to handle our muscles? Only one subject of sorrow, none of complaint, in respect to court, is just and reasonable; namely, to be rejected or overlooked when our exertions or experience might benefit our country. Forbidden to unite our glory with hers, let us cherish it at home the more fondly for its disappointment, and give her reason to say afterwards, she could have wished the union.

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lightest are their words and actions, curl their whiskers and their lips in scorn upon similar meditations.

Let us indulge in them; they are not weak; suckled by Wisdom, taught to walk by Virtue.

BROOKE.

Argue then no longer, about courts and discontents . . I would rather hear a few more verses; for a small draught increases the thirst of the very thirsty.

SIDNEY.

To write as the ancients have written, without borrowing a thought or expression from them, is the most difficult and the most excellent thing we can atchieve in poetry. I attempt no composition which I believe will occupy more than an hour or two, so that I can hardly claim any rank among the poets, but having once collected from curiosity all the *invocations to Sleep*, ancient and modern, I fancied it possible to compose one differently; which, if you consider the simplicity of the subject and the number of those who have treated it, may appear no easy matter.

Sleep! who contractest the waste realms of Night,
None like the wretched can extoll thy powers:
We think of thee when thou art far away,
We hold thee dearer than the light of day,
And most when Love forsakes us wish thee ours...
O hither bend thy flight!

Silent and welcome as the blessed shade
  Alcestis, to the dark Thessalian hall,
When Hercules and Death and Hell obeyed
  Her husband's desolate despondent call.

What fiend would persecute thee, gentle Sleep,
  Or beckon thee aside from man's distress?
Needless it were to warn thee of the stings
That pierce my pillow, now those waxen wings
  Which bore me to the sun of happiness,
    Have dropt into the deep *.

BROOKE.

If I cannot compliment you, as I lately complimented a poet on the same subject, by saying, *May all the gods and goddesses be as propitious to your invocation*, let me at least congratulate you that every thing here is fiction.

SIDNEY.

How many, who have abandoned for public life the studies of philosophy and poetry, may be compared to brooks and rivers, which in the beginning of their course have assuaged our thirst, and have invited us to tranquillity by their bright resemblance of it, and which afterwards partake the nature of that vast body into which they run, its

* The speakers were passionately fond of poetry, and more was introduced; but as this was altogether in imitation of their manner, which pleases few and ill accords with the character of the prose, it has been omitted.

dreariness, its bitterness, its foam, its storms, its everlasting noise and commotion! I have known several such, and when I have innocently smiled at them, their countenances seemed to say, *I wish I could despise you: but alas! I am a runaway slave, and from the best of mistresses to the worst of masters; I serve at a tavern where every hour is dinner-time, and pick a bone upon a silver dish.* And what is acquired by the more fortunate amongst them? they may put on a robe and use a designation which I have no right to: my cook and footman may do the same: one has a white apron, the other has red hose; I should be quite as much laughed at if I assumed them. A sense of inferior ability is painful: that I feel most at home: I could not do nearly so well what my domestics do; what the others do I could do better. My blushes are not at the superiority I have given myself, but at the comparison I must go through to give it.

The following lines were once intended for the preceding dialogue, and they appear to a critical friend of mine so adapted to the time and the persons, that, upon his judgement I subjoin them.

Again thou comest, breezy March!
Again beneath heaven's brighter arch
  The birds, that shun our winters, fly:
O'er every pathway trip along
Light feet, more light with frolic song,
  And eyes glance back, they know not why.

Say, who is that of leaf so rank,
Pushing the violet down the bank
  With hearted spearhead glossy-green?
And why that changeface mural box
Points at the myrtle, whom he mocks,
  Regardless what her cheer hath been?

The fennel waves her tender plume;
Mezereons, cloathed with thick perfume,
  And almonds, wait the lagging leaf:
Ha! and so long then have I stood
And not observed thee, modest bud,
  Wherefrom will rise their lawful chief!

O never say it, if perchance
Thou crown the cup or join the dance,
  Neither in anger nor in sport;
For Pleasure then would pass me by,
The Graces look ungraciously,
  Love frown, and drive me from his court.

CONVERSATION III.

KING HENRY IV

AND

SIR ARNOLD SAVAGE.

KING HENRY IV

AND

SIR ARNOLD SAVAGE.

SAVAGE.

I OBEY the commands of my liege.

HENRY.

'Tis well: thou appearest more civil and courteous, Sir Arnold Savage, than this morning in another place, when thou declared'st unto me, as speaker of the Commons, that no subsidy should be granted me until every cause of public grievance was removed *.

SAVAGE.

I am now in the house of the greatest man upon earth; I was then in the house of the greatest nation.

* Such are the words reported by Hakewell in his treatise de modo tenendi Parl.

HENRY.

Marry! thou speakest rightly upon both points; but the latter, I swear unto thee, pleaseth me most. And now, Savage, I do tell thee with like frankness, I had well-nigh sent a score of halberts among your worshipful knights and sleek woolstaplers, for I was sore chafed, and, if another had dealt with me in such wise, I should have straitway followed mine inclination. Thou knowest I am grievously lett and hindered in my projected wars, by such obstinacy and undutifulness in my people. I raised up the House of Commons four years ago, and placed it in opposition to my barons, with trust and confidence that, by the blessing of Christ and his saints, I might be less hampered in my complete conquest of France. This is monsterous: Parliament speaks too plainly and steps too stoutly for a creature of four years growth.

SAVAGE.

God forbid that any king of England should atchieve the conquest of all France. Patience, my liege and lord! Our Norman ancestors, the most warlike people upon whose banners the morning sun ever lighted, have wrested the sceptre from her swadling kings, and, pushing them back on their cushions and cupboards, have been contented with the seizure of their best and largest province.

The possession of more serfs would have tempted them to sit down in idleness, and no piece of unbroken turf would have been left, for the playground of their children in arms. William the Conqueror, the most puissant of knights and the wisest of statesmen, thought fit to set open a new career, lest the pride of his chevalry should be troublesome to him at home. He led them forth against the brave and good Harold, whose armies had bled profusely, in their wars against the Scot. Pity that such blood as the Saxon should ever have been spilt*! but hence are the titledeeds to our lands and tenements, the perpetuity of our power and dominion.

HENRY.

To preserve them from jeopardy, I must have silver in store; I must have horses and armour, and wherewith to satisfy the cravings of the soldier, always sharp, and sharpest of all after fighting.

SAVAGE.

My liege must also have other things, which escaped his recollection.

HENRY.

Stores of hides, and of the creatures that were

* The Danes under Harold were not numerous, and there were few vestiges of the Britons out of Wales and Cornwall.

within them; store of bacon; store of oats and barley, of rye and good wheaten corn; hemp, shipping, masts, anchors; pinetree and its piche from the Norwegian, yewtree from Corse and Dalmat. Divers other commodities must be procured from the ruler of the Adriatic, from him who never was infant nor stripling, whom God took by the right hand, and taught to walk by himself the first hour. Moreover I must have instruments of mine own device, weighty, and exceeding costly; such as machinery for beating down walls. Nothing of these hath escaped my knowledge or memory, but the recital of some befits a butler or sutler or armourer, better than a king.

SAVAGE.

And yet methinks, sir, there are others which you might have mentioned and have not, the recital of which would befitt a king, rather than sutler, butler, or armourer: they are indeed the very best and most necessary things in the world to batter down your enemy's walls with.

HENRY.

What may they be? you must find them.

SAVAGE.

You have found them, and must keep them... they are the hearts of your subjects. Your horse will not gallop far without them, though you

empty into his manger all the garners of Surrey. Wars are requisite, to diminish the power of your Barons, by keeping them long and widely separate from the main body of retainers, and under the ken of a stern and steddy prince, watching their movements, curbing their discourses, and inuring them to regular and sharp discipline. In general they are the worthless exalted by the weak, and dangerous from wealth ill acquired and worse expended. The whole people is a good king's household, quiet and orderly when well treated, and ever in readiness to defend him against the malice of the disappointed, the perfidy of the ungrateful, and the usurpation of the familiar. Act in such guise, most glorious Henry, that the king may say *my* people, and the people say *our* king: I then will promise you more, passing any computation, than I refused you this morning; the enjoyment of a blessing, to which the conquest of France in comparison is as a broken flagstaff.. self-approbation in government and security in power. A Norman by descent and an Englishman by birth and inheritance, the humiliation of France is requisite to my sense even of quiet enjoyment. Nevertheless I cannot delude my understanding, on which is impressed this truth, namely, that the condition of a people which hath made many con-

quests, doth ultimately become worse than that of the conquered. For, the conquered have no longer to endure the sufferings of weakness or the struggles of strength, and some advantages are usually holden forth to keep them peaceable and contented: but under a conquering prince the people are shadows, which lessen and lessen as he mounts in glory, until at last they become, if I may reasonably say so and unreprovedly, a thing of nothing, a shapeless form.

It is my office and duty to provide that this evil do not befall us; and that our late descendents, with the same incitements to bravery, the same means of greatness, may deserve as well of your family, my liege, as we have deserved of you.

HENRY.

Faith! I could find it in my heart, sir Arnold, to clip thine eagle's claws and perch thee somewhere in the peerage.

SAVAGE.

Measureless is the distance between my liege and me; but I occupy the second rank among men now living, forasmuchas, under the guidance of Almighty God, the most discreet and courageous have appointed me, unworthy as I am, to be the great comprehensive symbol of the English people.

Writers differ on the first Speakers of the House of Commons, for want rather of reflexion than of inquiry. The Saxons had frequently such chiefs; not always, nor regularly. In the reign of William Rufus there was a great council of parliament at Rockingham, as may be seen in the history of Eadmerus: his words are *totius regni adunatio*. He reports that a certain *knight* came forth and stood before the *people*, and spoke in the name and in the behalf of all. Peter de Montfort in the reign of Henry III spoke *vice totius communitatis, and consented* to the banishment of Ademar de Valence, bishop of Winchester. A sir John Bushey was the first presented by the Commons to the King in full parliament. Elsynge calls him "a special minion" to Richard II. It appears that he, like all his predecessors, was chosen for one particular speech, purpose, or sitting.

Sir Arnold Savage, according to Elsynge, "was the first who appears *upon any record*" to have been appointed to the dignity as now constituted. He was elected a second time four years afterwards, a rare honour in earlier days, and during this presidency he headed the Commons, and delivered their Resolutions in the plain words recorded by Hakewell.

The business on which my dialogue is founded, may be described by an extract from Rapin, who speaks of remonstrance only.

"Le roi, ayant rappresentè a ce parlement le besoin qu'il avoit d'un secours extraordinaire, les Communes allèrent en corps lui presenter une Adresse, dans laquelle elles lui remontroient que, sans fouler son peuple, il pouvoit subvenir a ses besoins. Elles exposoient que le clergè possedoit la troisieme partie des biens du royaume, et que, ne rendant au roi aucun service personel, il etoit juste qu'il contribuât de ses richesses aux besoins pressans de l'Etat. L'archevêque de Canterbury..

disoit que leur demande n'avoit pour fondement que l'irreligion et l'avarice."

The reformers, we see, were atheists in those days, as in ours: to strip off what is superfluous is to expose the body politic to decay.

Henry IV was among the most politic of our princes. He and his successor may be compared with Philip and Alexander: but the two great Macedonian princes had not such difficulties to surmount as the two great English. Epaminondas alone, of all the Greeks, atchieved a victory so arduous as that of Agincourt: that of Poictiers was greater. To subdue the Athenians, as Philip did, or the Asiatics, as Alexander, and to subdue the French, are widely different things. Henry V broke down their valour, and subverted the fundamental laws of their monarchy, as is proved by the sixth article in the treaty of Troyes.

"Après la mort du roi Charles, la couronne de France, avec toutes ses dependences, appartiendra au roi d'Angleterre, et à ses heritiers." ... A female then might eventually inherit it.

The monkish historians have given a glorious character of Henry IV. The fact is, Henry permitted any irregularity at home, and suffered any affront from his rival kings, rather than hazard the permanency of his power. He rose by the people; he stood by the clergy. He suffered even the isle of Wight to be invaded by the French, without a declaration of war against them.

We should be slow in our censure of princes. Kingship is a profession which has produced both the most illustrious and the most contemptible of the human race. That sovran is worthy of no slight respect, who rises in moral dignity to the level of his subjects; so manifold and so great are the impediments.

CONVERSATION IV.

SOUTHEY

AND

PORSON.

SOUTHEY

AND

PORSON.

PORSON.

I SUSPECT, Mr. Southey, you are angry with me for the freedom with which I have spoken of your poetry and Wordsworth's.

SOUTHEY.

What could have induced you to imagine it, Mr. Professor? You have indeed bent your eyes upon me, since we have been together, with somewhat of fierceness and defiance; I presume that you fancied me to be a commentator; and I am not irritated at a mistake. You wrong me, in your belief that an opinion on my poetical works hath molested me; but you afford me more than compensation in supposing me acutely sensible of any injustice done to Wordsworth. If we must converse at all upon these topics, we will converse on

him. What man ever existed, who spent a more retired, a more inoffensive, a more virtuous life, or who adorned it with nobler studies?

PORSON.

I believe, none; I have always heard it; and those who attack him with virulence or with levity, are men of as little morality as reflexion. I have demonstrated that one of them, he who wrote the *Pursuits of Literature*, could not construe a Greek sentence or scan a verse; and I have fallen on the very *Index* from which he drew out his forlorn hope on the parade. This is incomparably the most impudent fellow I have met with in the course of my reading, which has lain, you know, in a province where impudence is no rarity. I am sorry to say that we critics who write for the learned, have sometimes set a bad example to our younger brothers, the critics who write for the public: but if they were considerate and prudent, they would find out that a deficiency in weight and authority might in some measure be compensated by deference and decorum. Not to mention the refuse of the literary world, the sweeping of booksellers' shops, the dust thrown up by them in a corner to blow by pinches on new publications; not to tread upon or disturb this filth, the greatest of our critics now living are only great men comparatively; which they betray

when they look disdainfully on the humbler in judgement and intellect: for if these were not humbler, what would they themselves be? A little wit, or as that is not always at hand, a little impudence instead of it, throws its briar over dry and deep lacunes: a little grease covers a great quantity of poor broth. Instead of any thing in this way I would seriously recommend to the employer of our critics, young and old, that he oblige them to pursue a course of study such as the following; namely, that under the superintendence of some respectable student from the university, they first read and examine the contents of the book; a thing greatly more useful in criticism than is generally thought; secondly, that they carefully write them down, number them, and range them under their several heads; thirdly, that they mark every beautiful, every faulty, every ambiguous, every uncommon, expression. This being completed, that they inquire what author, ancient or modern, has treated the same subject; that they compare them, first in smaller, afterwards in larger, portions, noting every defect in precision, and its causes, every excellence, and its nature; that they graduate these, fixing *plus* and *minus*, and designating them more accurately and discriminately by means of colours, stronger or paler. For in-

stance, purple might express grandeur and majesty of thought, scarlet vigour of expression, pink liveliness, green elegant and equable composition: these however and others, as might best attract their notice and serve their memory. The same process may be used where authors have not written on the same subject, when those who have are wanting, or have touched it but incidentally. Thus Addison and Fontenelle, not very like, may be compared in the graces of style, in the number and degree of just thoughts and lively fancies: thus the dialogues of Cicero with those of Plato, his morals with those of Aristoteles, his orations with those of Demosthenes. It matters not if one be found superior to the other in this thing, and inferior in that; the exercise is taken; the qualities of two authors are explored and understood, and their distances laid down, as geographers speak, from accurate survey. The *plus* and *minus*, of good and bad and ordinary, will have something of a scale to rest upon; and after a time the degrees of the higher parts in intellectual dynamics may be more nearly attained, though never quite exactly.

SOUTHEY.

Nothing is easier than to mark and number the striking parts of Homer: it is little more difficult to

demonstrate why they are so. The same thing may then be done in Milton. These pieces in each poet may afterwards be summed up and collated. Every man will be capable or incapable of it, in proportion as his mind is poetical: few indeed will ever write any thing on the subject worth reading; but they will acquire strength and practise. The critic of the trade will gain a more certain livelihood and a more reputable one than before, and little will be spent upon his education . . .

PORSON.

which however must be entered on in an opposite way from the statuary's: the latter begins with dirt and ends with marble; the former begins with marble and ends with dirt. This, nevertheless, he may so manage as neither to be ridiculed nor starved.

SOUTHEY.

For my own part, I should be well contented with that share of reputation which might come meted out and delivered to me after the analytical and close comparison you propose. Its accomplishment can hardly be expected in an age when every thing must be done quickly. To run with oars and sails, was formerly the expression of orators for velocity: it would now express slowness. Our hats, our shoes, our whole habiliments, are made at

one stroke; our fortunes the same, and the same our criticisms. Under my fellow-labourers in this vineyard, many vines have bled and few have blossomed. The proprietors seem to keep them as agriculturists keep lean sheep, to profit by their hoof and ordure.

PORSON.

You were speaking this moment of the changes amongst us. Dwarfs are in fashion still; but they are the dwarfs of literature. These little zanies are invited to the assemblies of the gay world, and admitted to the dinners of the political. Limbs of the law, paralysed and laid up professionally, enter into association with printers, and take retaining fees from some authors, to harangue against others out of any brief before them.

SOUTHEY.

And they meet with encouragement and success! We stigmatize any lie but a malignant one, and we repell any attack but against fame, virtue, and genius. Fond of trying experiments on poison, we find that the strongest is extracted from blood; and this itself is rejected as unworthy of our laboratory, unless it be drawn from a generous and a gifted heart.

PORSON.

No other country has ever been so abundant in

speculations as ours ; but it would be incredible if we did not see it, that ten or fifteen men, of the humblest attainments, gain a livelihood by periodical attacks on its best writers. Adverse as I have shewn myself to the style and manner of Wordsworth, I never thought that all his reviewers put together could compose any thing equal to the worst paragraph in his volumes. I have spoken vehemently against him, and mildly against them ; because he could do better, they never could. If he thinks me his enemy it is through modesty : if they think me their friend it is through impudence. The same people would treat me with as little reverence as they treat him with, if any thing I write were popular, or could become so. It is by fixing on such works that they are carried with them into the doorway. The porter of Cleopatra would not have admitted the asps if they had not been under the figs.

Shew me, if you can, Mr. Southey, a temperate, accurate, solid exposition, of any English work whatever, in any English review.

SOUTHEY.

Not having at hand so many numbers as it would be requisite to turn over, I must decline the challenge.

PORSON.

I have observed the same man extoll in private, the very book on whose ruin he dined the day before.

SOUTHEY.

His judgement then may be ambiguous, but you must not deny him the merit of gratitude. If you blame the poor and vicious for abusing the solaces of poverty and vice, how much more should you censure those who administer to them the means of such indulgence.

PORSON.

The publications which excite the most bustle and biting from these fellows, are always the best, as the fruit on which the flies gather is the ripest. Periodical critics were never so plentiful as they now are. There is hardly a young author who does not make his first attempt in some review; shewing his teeth, hanging by his tail, pleased and pleasing by the volubility of his chatter, and doing his best to get a penny for his exhibitor and a nut for his own pouch, by the facetiousness of the tricks he performs upon our heads and shoulders. From all I can recollect of what I noticed when I turned over such matters, a wellsized and useful volume might be compiled and published annually, containing the incorrect expressions, and omitting the

opinions, of our booksellers' boys, the reviewers. Looking the other day by accident at two pages of *judgements*, recommendatory of new publications, I found, face to face, the following words, from not the worst of the species. *Scattering so considerable a degree of interest over the contemplation, &c.... The dazzling glitter of intellect, &c**.

* Altho the expressions of Reviews are nearly the same, it would be curious if Porson should have stumbled on these two together. I find them appended to my first volume, as extracts from the *Monthly Review* of June 1823 and May 1820. One of these extracts is from a criticism on a publication of Hazlitt, in which publication there are strokes as vivid and vigorous as in any work edited these hundred years. I regrett all enmities in the literary world, and particularly when they are exercised against the ornaments and glories of our country, against a Wordsworth and a Southey. It has been my fortune to love in general those men most who have thought most differently from me, on subjects wherin others pardon no discordance. I think I have no more right to be angry with a man, whose reason has followed up a process different from what mine has, and is satisfied with the result, than with one who has gone to Venice while I am at Sienna, and who writes

Now in what manner can we *scatter a degree?* unless it be one of those degrees which are scat-

to me that he likes the place, and that, altho he said once he should settle elsewhere, he shall reside in that city. My political opinions are my only ones, beyond square demonstration, that I am certain will never change. If my muscles have hardened in them and are fit for no other, I have not on this account the right or inclination to consider a friend untrue or insincere, who declares that he sees more of practical good in an opposite quarter, to that where we agreed to fix the speculative; and that he abandons the dim astounding majesty of mountain scenery, for the refreshing greenness and easy paths of the plain. I have walked always where I must breathe hard, and where such breathing was my luxury: I now sit somewhat stiller and have fewer aspirations, but I inhale the same atmosphere yet.

Now to others.. We have amongst us seven or eight great men; a number we never had in former times: why should they act like children? snatching at the coach and horses, or bread and butter, across the table, and breaking them and trampling them under foot; rejoicing at the wry faces and loud cries they occasion, and ready to hug and kiss,

tered at Edinburgh and Glasgow. Such an expression as *dazzling glitter* may often be applied

only at the moment when they are called away! For myself I neither ask nor deprecate: no compacts, no conventions, no confraternities, for me. Let them consider me as a cloud if they will: could they break and dissipate this cloud, which they cannot, it would form again upon some other day. The breath of the universe, directed at once against me, could detach from me but some loose atoms, and such only as ought to fall of themselves. Literature is not the mother who should talk so frequently to her children about chastisement; the most favorite word with her ever since her re-appearance amongst us. If chastisement is to be inflicted, let it fall upon the felon, who has no forbearance, no shame, no pity; who attacks the timid and modest, the partner once of his freshest and best assorted opinions, and, holding him by the throat, exults and laughs, and chaunts to young templars and benchers, in a loud clear voice, the ritual of apostacy, as by law established. No; even him let us rather pass quietly; and with patience let us hear others recommend him, for his decorum to be a gentleman of the bed-chamber, for his accuracy a lord of the treasury, for his dexterity a parliamentary leader, or for his equity a judge.

to fancy, but never to *judgement.* These gentlemen might do somewhat better, if they would read us for the sake of improvement, and not for the sake of shewing off a somewhat light familiarity, which never can appertain to them.

The time however, I am inclined to believe, is not far distant, when the fashionable will be as much ashamed of purchasing such wayside publications, as the learned would be of reading them. Come, let us away from these criers of cat's-meat and dog's-meat, who excite so many yelpings and mewings as they pass: the neighbourhood is none of the sweetest.

You will do me the favour, Mr. Southey, not to mention to those who may be kept under the regimen, what I have been proposing here for the benefit of letters; since, altho in the street and at college I have had quarrels, lighter or graver, with most other conditions, I have avoided both conflict and contact with writers for reviews and almanacks. Once indeed, I confess it, I was very near falling as low: words passed between me and the more favoured man of letters, who announces to the world the *works and days* of Newmarket, the

competitors at its games, their horses, their equisons and colours, and the attendent votaries of that goddess who so readily leaves Paphos or Amathus for this annual celebration.

Those who have failed as painters turn picture-cleaners, those who have failed as writers turn reviewers. Orator Henley taught in the last century, that the readiest made shoes are boots cut down: there are those who abundantly teach us now, that the readiest made critics are cut down poets. Their assurance is however by no means diminished from their ill success. Even the little man who followed you in the *Critical Review*, poor Robin Fellowes, whose pretensions widen every smile his imbecillity has excited, would, I am persuaded, if Homer were living, pat him in a fatherly way upon the cheek, and tell him that, by moderating his fire and contracting his prolixity, the public might ere long expect something from him worth reading.

I had visited a friend in *King's Road* when Robin entered.

Have you seen the Review? cried he... *worse than ever! I am resolved to insert a paragraph in the papers, declaring that I had no concern in the last number.*

Is it so very bad? said I quietly.

Infamous! detestable! exclamed he.

Sit down then... nobody will believe you; was my answer.

Since that morning he has discovered that I drink harder than usual, that my faculties are wearing fast away, that once indeed I had some Greek in my head, but... he then claps the forefinger to the side of his nose, turns his eye slowly upward, and looks compassionately and calmly.

SOUTHEY.

Come, Mr. Porson, grant him his merits: no critic is better contrived to make any work a monthly one, no writer more dexterous in giving a finishing touch.

PORSON.

Let him take his due and be gone: now to the rest. The plagiary has a greater latitude of choice than we: and if he brings home a parsnip or turnip-top, when he could as easily have pocketed a nectarine or a pine-apple, he must be a blockhead. I never heard the name of the pursuer of literature, who has little more merit in having stolen than he would have had if he had never stolen at all; and I have forgotten that other man's, who evinced his fitness to be the censor of our age, by a translation of the most naked and impure satires of antiquity, those of Juvenal, which owe their preservation to the partiality of the friars. I shall

entertain a very unfavorable opinion of him if he has translated them well: pray has he?

SOUTHEY.

Indeed I do not know. I read poets for their poetry, and to extract that nutriment of the intellect and of the heart which poetry should contain. I never listen to the swans of the sess-pool, and must declare that nothing is heavier to me than rottenness and corruption.

PORSON.

You are right, sir, perfectly right. A translator of Juvenal would open a public drain to look for a needle, and may miss it. My nose is not easily offended; but I must have something to fill my belly: come, we will lay aside the scrip of the transpositor and the pouch of the pursuer, in reserve for the days of unleavened bread, and again, if you please, to the lakes and mountains. Now we are both in better humour, I must bring you to a confession that in your friend Wordsworth there is occasionally a little trash.

SOUTHEY.

A haunch of venison would be trash to a Brahmin, a bottle of burgundy or tokay to the xerif of Mecca.

PORSON.

I will not be anticipated by you. Trash, I con-

fess, is no proof that nothing good can lie above it and about it. The roughest and least manageable soil surrounds gold and diamonds. Homer and Dante and Shakespear and Milton have each many hundred lines (as we are alone I will say some thousands) worth little; lines without force, without feeling, without fancy; in short, without beauty of any kind. But it is the character of modern poetry, as it is of modern arms and equipments, to be more uniformly trim and polished. The ancients in both had more strength and splendour, as also more inequality and rudeness. Among the ancients are included the names abovementioned, and all those poets who are fairly out of the school now open; just as we call a family not only the master, the mistress, and the children, but likewise the servants and the retinue.

SOUTHEY.

We are guided by precept, by habit, by taste, by constitution. Hitherto all our sentiments on poetry have been delivered down to us from authority; and if it can be demonstrated, as I think it may be, that the authority is inadequate, and that the dictates are often inapplicable and often misinterpreted, you will allow me to remove the cause out of court. Every man can see what is very bad in a poem, almost every one can see what is very

good; but you, Mr. Porson, who have turned over all the volumes of all the commentators, will inform me whether I am right or wrong in asserting, that no critic has yet appeared who has been able to fix or to discern the exact degrees of excellence above a certain point.

PORSON.

None.

SOUTHEY.

The reason is, because the eyes of no one have been upon a level with it. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the contest of Hesiod and Homer to have taken place: the judges, who decided in favour of the worse, and he indeed in the poetry has little merit, may have been elegant wise and conscientious men. Their decision was in favour of that, to the species of which they had been the most accustomed. Corinna was preferred to Pindar no fewer than five times; and the best judges in Greece gave her the preference; yet whatever were her powers, and beyond a question they were extraordinary, we may assure ourselves that she stood many degrees below Pindar. Nothing is more absurd than the report, that the judges were prepossessed in her favour by her beauty. Plutarch tells us that she was much older than her competitor, who consulted her judgment in his earlier odes.

Now, granting their first competition to have been when Pindar was twenty years old, and that all the others were in the years succeeding, her beauty must have been somewhat on the decline; for in Greece there are few women who retain the graces, none who retain the bloom of youth, beyond the twenty-third year. Her countenance, I doubt not, was expressive: but expression, although it gives beauty to men, makes women pay dearly for its stamp, and pay soon. Nature seems, in protection to their loveliness, to have ordered that they, who are our superiors in quickness and sensibility, should be little disposed to laborious thought, or to long excursions in the labyrinths of fancy. We may be convinced that the verdict of the judges was biassed by nothing else than their habitudes of thinking: we may be convinced too that, living in an age when poetry was cultivated so highly, and selected from the most acute and the most dispassionate, they were subject to no greater errors of opinion than are the learned messmates of our English colleges.

PORSON.

You are more liberal in your largesses to the fair Greeks, than a friend of mine was, who resided in Athens to acquire the language. He assured me that beauty there was in bud at thirteen, in full

blossom at fifteen, losing a leaf or two every day at seventeen, trembling on the thorn at nineteen, and under the tree at twenty. He would have been but an indifferent courtier in the palace of a certain prince, whose exclamation was,

O could a girl of sixty breed,
Then, Marriage, thou wert bliss indeed!

Returning, Mr. Southey, to the difficulty, or rather to the rarity, of an accurate and just survey of poetical and other literary works, I do not see why we should not borrow an idea from geometricians and astronomers, why we also should not have our triangles and quadrants, why in short we should not measure out writings by small portions at a time, and compare the brighter parts of two authors, page for instance by page. The minor beauties, the complexion and contexture, may be considered at last, and more at large. Daring geniusses, ensigns and undergraduates, members of Anacreontic and Pindaric clubs, will scoff at me. Painters who can draw nothing correctly, hold Raffael in contempt, and appeal to the sublimity of Michael-Angelo and the splendour of Titian, ignorant that these great men were great by science first, and employed in painting, at all times, the very means I propose for criticism. Venus and the damned submitted to the same squaring.

Such a method would be very useful to critics

in general, and even the wisest and most impartial would be much improved by it; although few, either by these means or any, are likely to be quite correct, or quite unanimous, on the merits of any two authors whatsoever.

SOUTHEY.

Those who are learners would be teachers; while those who have learned much would procure them at any price. It is only when we have mounted high, that we are sensible of wanting a hand.

PORSON.

On the subject of poetry in particular, there are some questions not yet sufficiently discussed: I will propose two. First, admitting that in all the tragedies of Sophocles there was (which I believe) twice or thrice as much good poetry as in the Iliad, does it follow that he was as admirable a poet as Homer?

SOUTHEY.

I doubt it; so much do I attribute to the conception and formation of a novel and vast design, and so wide is the difference I see between the completion of one very great, and the perfection of many smaller. Would even these have existed without Homer? I think not.

PORSON.

My next question is, whether a poet is to be

judged from the quantity of his bad poetry or from the quality of his best?

SOUTHEY.

I should certainly say from the latter: because it must be in poetry as in sculpture and painting; he who arrives at a high degree of excellence in these arts, will have made more models, more sketches and designs, than he who has reached but a lower; and the conservation of them, whether by accident or by choice, can injure and affect in no manner his more perfect and elaborate works. A drop of sealing-wax, falling by chance or negligence, may efface a fine impression: but what is well done in poetry is never to be effaced by what is ill done afterwards. Even the bad poetry of a good poet hath something in it which renders it more valuable, to a judge of these matters, than what passes for much better, and what in many essential points is truly so. I will however keep to the argument, not having lost sight of my illustration, in alluding to designs and sketches. Many men would leave themselves pennyless, to purchase an early and rude drawing by Raffael; some arabesque, some nose upon a gryphen, or gryphen upon a nose, and never would inquire whether the painter had kept it in his portfolio or had cast it away. The same persons, and others whom we call much wiser, exclame loudly against

any literary sketch unworthy of a leaf among the productions of its author. No ideas are so trivial, so incorrect, so incoherent, but they may have entered the idle fancy, and have taken a higher place than they ought in the warm imagination, of the best poets. We find in Dante, as you just now remarked, a prodigious quantity of them; and indeed not a few in Virgil, grave as he is, and stately. Infantine and petty there is hardly any thing in the Iliad, but the dull and drowthy stop us unexpectedly now and then. The boundaries of mind lie beyond these writers, altho their splendour lets us see nothing on the further side. In so wide and untrodden a creation as that of Shakespear, can we wonder or complain that sometimes we are bewildered and entangled in the exuberance of fertility? Drybrained men upon the Continent, the trifling wits of the theatre, accurate however and expert calculators, tell us that his beauties are balanced by his faults. The poetical opposition, the liberal whig wiseacres, puffing for popularity, cry cheerily against them, *his faults are balanced by his beauties.* In reality, all the faults that ever were committed in poetry would be but as air to earth, if we could weigh them against one single thought or image, such as almost every scene exhibits, in every drama of this unrivalled genius.

PORSON.

A third question.. What is the reason why, when not only the glory of great kings and statesmen, but even of great philosophers, is much enhanced by two or three good apophthegms, that of a great poet is lowered by them, even if he should invest them with good verse? for certainly the dignity of a great poet is thought to be lowered by the writing of epigrams.

SOUTHEY.

The great poet could do better things; the others could not. People in this apparent act of injustice do real justice, and conferr high honour where it is due, without intending or knowing it.

All writers have afforded some information, or have excited some sentiment or idea, somewhere. This alone should exempt the humblest of them from revilings, unless it appear that he hath misapplied his powers, from insolence or from malice. In that case, whatever sentence may be passed upon him, I consider it no honour to be the executioner. What must we think of those who travel far and wide, that, before they go to rest, they may burst into the arbour of a recluse, whose weakest thoughts are benevolence, whose worst are purity? On his poetry I shall say nothing, unless you lead me to it, wishing you however to examine it analytically and severely.

PORSON.

I will not dissemble or deny, that to compositions of a new kind, like Wordsworth's, we come without scales and weights, and without the means of making an assay.

SOUTHEY.

Mr. Porson, it does not appear to me, that anything more is necessary in the first instance, than to interrogate our hearts in what manner they have been affected. If the ear is satisfied; if at one moment a tumult is aroused in the breast, and tranquillised at another, with a perfect consciousness of equal power exerted in both cases; if we rise up from the perusal of the work with a strong excitement to thought, to imagination, to sensibility; above all, if we sat down with some propensities toward evil, and walk away with much stronger toward good, in the midst of a world, which we never had entered, and of which we never had dreamed before, shall we perversely put on again the *old man* of criticism, and deny that we have been conducted by a most beneficent and most potent genius? Nothing proves to me so manifestly in what a pestiferous condition are its lazarettos, as when I observe how little hath been objected against those who have substituted words for things, and how much against those who have reinstated things for words.

Let Wordsworth prove to the world, that there may be animation without blood and broken bones, and tenderness remote from the stews. Some may doubt it; for even things the most evident are often but little perceived and strangely estimated. Swift ridiculed the music of Handel and the generalship of Marlborough, Pope the style of Middleton and the scholarship of Bentley, Gray the abilities of Shaftesbury and the eloquence of Rousseau. Shakespear hardly found those who would collect his tragedies; Milton was read from godliness; Virgil was antiquated and rustic, Cicero Asiatic*. What a rabble has persecuted my friend, in these latter times the glory of our country! An elephant is born to be consumed by ants in the midst of his unapproachable solitudes. Wordsworth is the prey of Jeffrey. Why repine? and not rather amuse ourselves with allegories, and recollect that God in the creation left his noblest creature at the mercy of a serpent.

PORSON.

In my opinion your friend is verbose; not indeed without something for his words to rest upon, but

* An admirable scholar and elegant French writer says *La prose de Moliere vaut beaucoup mieux que ses vers.* He would have spoken nearer the truth, if he had said that the prose of Moliere is among the most detestable in the whole language.

from a resolution to gratify and indulge his capacity. He pursues his thoughts too far; and considers more how he may shew them entirely, than how he may shew them advantageously. Good men may utter whatever comes uppermost, good poets may not. It is better, but it is also more difficult, to make a selection of thoughts, than to accumulate them. He who has a splendid sideboard, should likewise have an iron chest with a double lock upon it, and should hold in reserve a greater part than he displays.

Wordsworth goes out of his way to be attacked. He picks up a piece of dirt, throws it on the carpet in the midst of the company, and cries *This is a better man than any of you.* He does indeed mould the base material into what form he chooses; but why not rather invite us to contemplate it, than challenge us to condemn it? This surely is false taste.

SOUTHEY.

The principal and the most general accusation against Wordsworth is, that the vehicle of his thoughts is unequal to them. Now did ever the judges at the Olympic games say, *We would have awarded to you the meed of victory, if your chariot had been equal to your horses: it is true they have won; but the people is displeased at a car neither*

new nor richly gilt, and without a gryphen or sphynx engraven on the axle?

You admire simplicity in Euripides; you censure it in Wordsworth; believe me, sir, it arises in neither from penury of thought, which seldom has produced it, but from the strength of temperance, and at the suggestion of principle. Some of his critics are sincere in their censure, and are neither invidious nor unlearned; but their optics have been formed upon other objects, altogether dissimilar, and they are (permitt me an expression not the worse for daily use) entirely out of their element. His very clearness puzzles and perplexes them, and they imagine that straitness is distortion, as children on seeing a wand dipt in limpid and still water.

PORSON.

Fleas know not whether they are on the body of a giant, or upon one of ordinary size. Clear writers, like clear fountains, do not seem so deep as they are: the turbid look most profound.

SOUTHEY.

Ignorance however has not been single-handed the enemy of Wordsworth but Petulance; and Malignity have accompanied her, and have been unremittent in their attacks. Small poets, small critics, lawyers, who have much time upon their hands, and hanging heavily, come forward unfeed against him; such is the spirit of patriotism, rushing every-

where for the public good. Most of these have tried their fortune at some little lottery-office of literature, and, receiving a blank, have chewed upon it harshly and wryly. We, like jackdaws, are very amicable creatures while we all are together in the dust; but let any one gain a battlement or steeple, and behold! the rest fly about him at once, and beat him down.

Take up a poem of Wordsworth's and read it; I would rather say, read them all; and, knowing that a mind like yours must grasp closely what comes within it, I will then appeal to you whether any poet of our country, since Shakespear, has exerted a greater variety of powers with less strain and less ostentation. I would however, with his permission, lay before you for this purpose a poem which is yet unpublished and incomplete.

PORSON.

Pity, with his abilities, he does not imitate the ancients somewhat more.

SOUTHEY.

Whom did they imitate? If his genius is equal to theirs he has no need of a guide. He also will be an ancient; and the very counterparts of those, who now decry him, will extoll him a thousand years hence in malignity to the moderns. The ancients have always been opposed to them; just as, at routs and dances, elderly beauties to younger. It

would be wise to contract the scene of action, and to decide the business in both cases by couples.

Why do you repeat the word *rout* so often?

PORSON.

Not because the expression is novel and barbarous, I do assure you, nor because the thing itself is equally the bane of domestic and of polite society. I once was at one by mistake, and really I saw there what you describe; and this made me (as you tell me I did, although I was not aware of it) repeat the word, and smile. You seem curious.

SOUTHEY.

Rather so, indeed.

PORSON.

I had been dining out: there were some who smoked after dinner; within a few hours the fumes of their pipes produced such an effect on my head, that I was willing to go into the air a little. Still I continued hot and thirsty; and an undergraduate, whose tutor was my old acquaintance, proposed that we should turn into an oyster-cellar, and refresh ourselves with oysters and porter. The rogue, instead of this, conducted me to a fashionable house in the neighbourhood of Saint Jamesis; and although I expostulated with him, and insisted that we were going upstairs, and not down, he

appeared to me so ingenuous, and so sincere in his protestations to the contrary, that I could well disbelieve him no longer. Nevertheless, I received on the stairs so many shoves and elbowings, I could not help telling him plainly, that, if indeed it was the oyster-cellar in Fleet-street, the company was very much altered for the worse, and that in future I should frequent another. When the fumes of the pipes had entirely left me, I discovered the deceit by the splendour and indecency of the dresses, and was resolved not to fall into temptation. Although, to my great satisfaction and surprise, no immodest proposal was directly made to me, I looked about, anxious that no other man in company should know me, besides those whose wantonness had conducted me thither, and would have escaped if I could have found the door, from which every effort I made appeared to remove me farther and farther.

A pretty woman said loudly, *He has no gloves on!*

What nails the creature has! replied an elder one.. *Piano-forte keys, wanting the white!* I tried to conceal my hands as well as might be; when suddenly there was a pleasant sort of titter from the middle-aged and young, and a very grave look and much erectness from the rest. So serious and stern did they appear to me, that I never saw

the like but once; which was in a file of soldiers, ordered out to shoot a deserter at St. Ives. I was the only person, young or old, male or female, that blushed; and I had not done so before for thirty years, to the best of my recollection. I now understood that blushing is a sign of half-breeding, and that an elevation of the eyebrow, and the opening of the lips a straw's breadth, are the most violent expressions of feeling permitted in such places. The gentlemen were neutral; unless the neutrality may be said to have been broken by two or three words, which I suspect to have been meant for English!.. a *token-coinage*, fit only for the district. One however, more polite and more attentive, bowed to me. I did not recollect his features, which he divined by mine, and said, *Sir, I once recovered your watch for you, and wish I could now as easily recover its neighbour the button.* I looked down, and perceived that my place of concealment, the refuge of my hand, had, like my conductor, been false to me. The gentleman was a thief-taker: three others of the fraternity had likewise been invited, on suspicion that there were several pickpockets; I mean besides the legitimate, and supernumerary to those who had been seated by the lady of the house at the card-tables. The thief-takers were all recognized by the company: the higher and more

respectable spoke familiarly with them; persons of inferior rank saluted them more distantly and coldly: and there were some few who slank obliquely from them as they passed, like landsmen walking upon deck in a breeze. This shyness was far from mutual; and the gentlemen, who presided here as the good genii or tutelary deities of the place, awakened with winks one another's smiles, and pardoned the inattention.

I little thought that any of the company could have known me, or that my treacherous friend would have mentioned my name; and still less should I have prognosticated that I must, in an unguarded moment, set a fashion to the dandies, such as the dress of the ancients and the decency of the moderns had hitherto precluded.

I now come to your remark, confirmed to me by my own observation, upon the hostilities at such parties. A beldame with prominent eyes, painted mole-hairs, and abundantly rich in the extensive bleaching-ground of cheeks and shoulders, a German as I imagine, was speaking all manner of spiteful things against a young person called pretty; and after a long discussion, not only on her defects, but also on those of her family and parchments, *Who is she? I should like to know*, terminated the effusion. My betrayer had absconded, not

without commissioning another to find me and conduct me home. As we were passing through the folding-doors, I saw the baroness (for such he called her) with her arm upon the neck of the very girl, and looking softly and benignly, and styling her *my young friend here*, in such a sweet guttural accent, so long in drawing up, you would have thought it must have come from the heart, at the very least. I mentioned my surprise.

She was so strongly the fashion at the close of the evening, said my fashionable Mentor, *that it would never do* (*for the remainder of the night*) *not to know her; and, as proper time was wanting to get up a decent enmity, nothing was left for it but sworn friendship. Tomorrow the baroness will call her my protegée, and the day after ask again who is she? unless she happens to hear that the girl has a person of high rank among her connexions, which I understand she has; then the baroness will press her to the heart, or to that pound of flesh which lies next to it.*

Trifling people are often useful, unconsciously and unintentionally. Illustrations may be made out of them even for scholars and sages. A hangman sells to a ragman the materials on which a Homer is printed. Would you imagine that, in

places like these, it was likely for me to gain a new insight into language?

SOUTHEY.

I should not indeed. Children make us reflect on it occasionally, by an unusual and just expression; but in such society all is trite and trivial.

PORSON.

Yet so it was. A friend who happened to be there, although I did not see him, asked me afterwards what I thought of the naked necks of the ladies.

To tell you the truth, replied I, *the women of all countries, and the men in most, have usually kept their necks naked.*

You appear not to understand me, or you quibble, said he; *I mean their bosoms.*

I then understood, for the first time, that *neck* signifies *bosom* when we speak of women, although not so when we speak of men or other creatures. But if *bosom* is *neck*, what, according to the same scale of progression, ought to be *bosom?* The usurped dominion of neck extends from the ear downwards, to where mermaids become fish. This conversation led me to reflect that I was born in the time when people had thighs.. long before your memory, I imagine, Mr. Southey. At present there is nothing but leg from the hip to the

instep. My friend Mr. Small of Peter-house, a very decent man, and fond of fugitive pieces, such as are collected or written by our Pratts and Mavors and Valpys, read before a lady and her family, from under the head of *descriptive*, some charming verses about the spring and the bees. Unluckily the *honied thighs* of our European sugar-slaves caught the attention of the mother, who coloured excessively at hearing the words, and said with much gravity of reproof, *Indeed, Mr. Small, I never could have thought it of you,* and added, waving her hand with matronal dignity toward the remainder of the audience, *Sir, I have daughters.*

I saw among the rest two or three strangers of distinction, as I understood by their dresses and decorations: and, observing that nobody noticed them, except the lady of the house, who smiled and dropped a few syllables as she passed, I inquired the next day, whether they were discreditable or suspicious. *On the contrary,* said my informant, *they are of the highest character as well as of the highest rank, and, above all, of well-proved loyalty: but we Englishmen lose our facility of conversation in the presence of strangers; added to which, we consider it an indecorous thing, to pay the least attention to persons to whom we*

never were introduced. Strangers act otherwise. Every man of education, and of a certain rank, does the honours, not of the house, but of society at large. In no company at Paris, or any other capital in the world, would a forener stand five minutes, without receiving some mark of attention; a compliment, an inquiry, a congratulation, accompanied by a smile at least or other exterior act of welcome courtesy. Abroad, all gentlemen are equal, from the duc et pair to the Gascon who dines on chesnuts; and all feel that they are so. The Englishman of ancient but private name, is indignant and sullen that his rights at home are denied him; and his wounded pride renders him unsocial and uncivil. Pride of another kind acts on our society in the same manner. I have seen Irish peers, issuing from the shop and the desk, push rudely and scornfully by the most ancient of the French nobility; the cadets of whose families founded the oldest of ours, and waved the sword of knighthood over our Plantagenets. For which reason, whenever I sit down at table with an Irish peer of recent creation, I select the sturdiest of my servants to stand behind my chair, with orders to conduct him by the ears out of the room, should I lift up a finger to indicate the command.

I ought not to have interrupted you so long, in

your attempt to prove Wordsworth shall I say the rival or the resembler of the ancients?

SOUTHEY.

Such excursions are not unseasonable in such discussions, and lay in a store of good humour for them. Your narrative has amused me exceedingly. As you call upon me to return with you to the point we set out from, I hope I may assert without a charge of paradox, that whatever is good in poetry is common to all good poets, however wide may be the diversity of manner. Nothing can be more dissimilar than the three Greek tragedians: but would you preferr the closest and best copier of Homer to the worst (whichever he be) amongst them? Let us avoid what is indifferent or doubtful, and embrace what is good, whether we see it in another or not; and if we have contracted any peculiarity while our muscles and bones were softer, let us hope finally to outgrow it. Our feelings and modes of thinking forbid and exclude a very frequent imitation of the old classics, not to mention our manners, which have a nearer connexion than is generally known to exist with the higher poetry. When the occasion permitted it, Wordsworth has not declined to treat a subject as an ancient poet of equal vigour would have treated it. Let me repeat to you his Laodamia.

PORSON.

After your animated recital of this classic poem, I begin to think more highly of you both. It is pleasant to find two poets living as brothers, and particularly when the palm lies between them, with hardly a third in sight. Those who have ascended to the summit of the mountain, sit quietly and familiarly side by side; it is only those who are climbing with briars about their legs, that kick and scramble. Yours is a temper found less frequently in our country than in others. The French poets indeed must stick together to keep themselves warm. By employing courteous expressions mutually, they indulge their vanity rather than their benevolence, and bring the spirit of contest into action gaily and safely. Among the Romans we find Virgil, Horace, and several of their contemporaries, intimately united and profuse of reciprocal praise. Ovid, Cicero, and Pliny are authors the least addicted to censure, and the most ready to offer their testimony in favour of abilities in Greek or countryman. These are the three Romans, the least amiable of nations, and (one excepted) the least sincere, with whom I should have liked best to spend an evening.

SOUTHEY.

Ennius and old Cato, I am afraid, would have run away with your first affections.

PORSON.

Old Cato! he, like a wafer, must have been well wetted to be good for any thing. Such gentlemen as old Cato we meet every day in St. Mary Axe, and wholesomer wine than his wherever there are sloes and turnips. Ennius could converse without ignorance about Scipio, and without jealousy about Homer.

SOUTHEY.

And I think he would not have disdained to nod his head on reading the *Laodamia.*

PORSON.

You have recited a most spirited thing indeed. I never had read it. Now to give you a proof that I have been attentive, I will remark two passages that offend me. In the first stanza,

> With sacrifice before the rising morn
> Performed, my slaughtered lord have I required;
> And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
> Him of the infernal Gods have I desired.*

The second line and the fourth terminate too much alike: *have I required* and *have I desired* are worse than prosaic; besides which there are four words together of equal length in each.

* The memory of Porson was extraordinary, and quite capable of this repetition.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake, as a witness, of a second birth
For all that is most perfect upon earth.

In a composition such as Sophocles might have exulted to own, and in a stanza the former part of which might have been heard with shouts of rapture in the regions it describes, how unseasonable is the allusion to *witness* and *second birth!* which things, however holy and venerable in themselves, come stinking and reeking to us from the conventicle. I desire to see Laodamia in the silent and gloomy mansion of her beloved Protesilaus; not elbowed by the godly butchers in Tottenham-court-road, nor smelling devoutly of ratafia among the sugar-bakers' wives at Blackfriars.

Mythologies should be kept distinct: the fireplace of one should never be subject to the smoke of another. The Gods of different countries, when they come together unexpectedly, are jealous Gods, and, as our old women say, *turn the house out of windows.*

A current of rich and bright thoughts runs throughout the poem. Pindar himself would not, on that subject, have braced one to more vigour and freshness, nor Euripides have inspired into it

more tenderness and passion. I am not insensible to that warmly chaste morality which is the soul of it, nor indifferent to the benefits that literature on many occasions has derived from Christianity. But poetry is a luxury to which, if she tolerates and permits it, she accepts no invitation: she beats down your gates and citadels, levels your high places, and eradicates your groves. For which reason I dwell more willingly with those authors, who cannot mix and confound the manners they represent. The hope that we may rescue at Herculanum a great number of them, hath, I firmly believe, kept me alive. Reasonably may the best be imagined to exist in a library of some thousands. It will be recorded to the infamy of the kings and princes now reigning, or rather of those whose feet put into motion their rocking-horses, that they never have made a common cause in behalf of learning, but on the contrary have made a common cause against it. The earth opened her entrails before them, conjured them to receive again, while it was possible, the glories of their species... and they turned their backs. They pretend that it is not their business or their duty to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. This is not an internal affair of any: it interests all; it belongs to all; and these scrupulous men have no scruple

to interfere in giving their countenance and assistence, when a province is to be torn away or a people to be invaded.

SOUTHEY.

To neglect what is recoverable in the authors of antiquity, is like rowing away from a crew that is making its escape from shipwreck.

PORSON.

The most contemptible of the Medicean family did more for the advancement of letters than the whole body of existing potentates. If their delicacy is shocked or alarmed at the idea of making a proposal to send scientific and learned men thither, let them send a brace of pointers as internuncios, and the property is their own. Twenty men in seven years might retrieve the worst losses we experience from the bigotry of popes and califs. I do not intend to assert, that every Herculanean manuscript might within that period be unfolded; but the three first legible sentences might be; which is quite sufficient to inform the scholar, whether a further attempt on the scroll would repay his trouble. There are fewer than thirty Greek authors worth inquiring for; they exist beyond doubt, and beyond doubt they may, by attention, patience, and skill, be brought to light.

SOUTHEY.

You and I, Mr. Porson, are truly and sincerely concerned in the loss of such treasures: but how often have we heard much louder lamentations than ours, from gentlemen who, if they were brought again to light, would never cast their eyes over them, even in the bookseller's window. I have been present at homilies on the corruption and incredulity of the age, and principally on the violation of the sabbath, from sleek clergymen, canons of cathedrals, who were at the gaming-table the two first hours of it, on that very day; and I have listened to others on the loss of the classics, from men who never read one half of what is remaining to us of Cicero and Livius. The Greek language is almost unknown out of England and northern Germany: in the remainder of the world, exclusive of Greece, I doubt whether fifty scholars ever read one page of it without a version. Give fifteen to Italy, twelve to the Netherlands, five to France; the remainder will hardly be collected in Sweden, Russia, Austria: as for Spain and Portugal, we might as well look for them among the Moors and Negroes. The knowledge of books written in our own language is extending daily in our country, which, whatever dissatisfaction or disgust its rulers may occasion in you,

contains four-fifths of the learned and scientific men now on earth.

PORSON.

This position is, I think, incontrovertible: but although the knowledge too of Greek is extending in England, I doubt whether it is to be found in such large masses as formerly. Schools and universities, like rills and torrents, roll down some grains of it every season; but the lumps have been long stored up in cabinets. I delight in the diffusion of learning; yet, I must confess it, I am most gratified and transported at finding a large portion of it in one place: just as I would rather have a solid pat of butter at breakfast, than a splash of grease upon the table-cloth that covers half of it. Do not attempt to defend the idle and inconsiderate knaves who manage our affairs for us; or defend them on some other ground: prove, if you please, that they have, one after another, been incessantly occupied in rendering us more moral, more prosperous, more free; but abstain, sir, from any allusion to their solicitude on the improvement of our literary condition. With a smaller sum than is annually expended on the appointment of some silly and impertinent young envoy, we might restore all, or nearly all, those writers of immortal name, whose disappearance has been the regret of

Genius for four entire centuries. In my opinion a few thousand pounds, laid out on such an undertaking, would be laid out as creditably as on a Persian carpet or a Turkish tent; as creditably as on a collar of rubies and a ball-dress of Brussells-lace for our Lady in the manger, or as on gilding, for the adoration of princesses and their capuchins, the posteriors and anteriors of saint Januarius.

CONVERSATION V.

OLIVER CROMWEL

AND

WALTER NOBLE.

OLIVER CROMWEL

AND

WALTER NOBLE.

CROMWEL.

WHAT brings thee back from Staffordshire, friend Walter?

NOBLE.

I hope, general Cromwel, to persuade you that the death of Charles will be considered by all Europe as a most atrocious action.

CROMWEL.

Thou hast already persuaded me: what then?

NOBLE.

Surely then you will prevent it, for your authority is great. Even those who upon their consciences found him guilty, would remitt the penalty of blood, some from policy, some from mercy. I have conversed with Hutchinson, with Ludlow, your friend and mine, and with Walter Long: you

will oblige these worthy friends, and unite in your favour the suffrages of the truest and trustiest men living. There are many others, with whom I am in no habits of intercourse, who are known to entertain the same sentiments; and these also are among the country gentlemen, to whom our parliament owes the better part of its reputation.

CROMWEL.

You country gentlemen bring with you into the People's House a freshness and sweet savour, which our citizens lack mightily. I would fain merit your esteem, heedless of those pursy fellows from hulks and warehouses, with one ear lappeted by the pen behind it, and the other an heirloom, as Charles would have had it, in Laud's star-chamber. Oh! they are proud and bloody men. My heart melts; but alas! my authority is null: I am the servant of the Commonwealth: I will not, dare not, betray it. If Charles Stuart had only threatened my death, in the letter we ripped out of the saddle, I would have reproved him manfully and turned him adrift: but others are concerned, lives more precious than mine, worn as it is with fastings, prayers, long services, and preyed upon by a pouncing disease. The Lord hath led him into the toils laid for the innocent. Foolish man! he never could eschew evil counsel.

NOBLE.

In comparison with you, he is but as a pinnacle to a butress. I acknowledge his weaknesses, and cannot wink upon his crimes: but what you visit as the heaviest of them, perhaps was not so, although the most disasterous to both parties, the bearing of arms against his people. He fought for what he considered as his hereditary property: we do the same: should we be hanged for losing a lawsuit?

CROMWEL.

Not unless it is the second... Thou talkest finely and foolishly, Wat, for a man of thy calm discernment. If a rogue holds a pistol to my breast, do I ask him who he is or what? do I care whether his doublet be of catskin or of dogskin? Fie upon such wicked sophisms! Marvelous, how the devil works upon good men's minds.

NOBLE.

Charles was always more to be dreaded by his friends than by his enemies, and now by neither.

CROMWEL.

God forbid that Englishman should be feared by Englishman! but to be daunted by the weakest, to bend before the worst... I tell thee, Walter Noble, that if Moses and the prophets commanded

me to this villainy, I would draw back and mount my horse.

NOBLE.

I could wish that our history, already too dark with blood, should contain, as far as we are concerned in it, some unpolluted pages.

CROMWEL.

'Twere better so, much better. Never shall I be called, I promise thee, an unnecessary shedder of blood. Remember, my good prudent friend, of what materials our sectaries are composed: what hostility against all eminence, what rancour against all glory. Not only kingly power offends them, but every other; and they talk of *putting to the sword*, as if it were the quietest, gentlest, and most ordinary thing in the world. The knaves even dictate from their stools and benches, to men in armour, bruized and bleeding for them, and with schooldames' scourges in their fists do they give counsel to those who protect them from the cart and halter. In the name of the Lord, I must piss upon these firebrands before I can make them tractable.

NOBLE.

I lament their blindness; but follies wear out the faster by being hard run upon. This ferment-

ing sourness will presently turn vapid, and people will cast it out. I am not surprised that you are discontented and angry at what thwarts your better nature. But come, Cromwel, overlook them, despise them, and erect to yourself a glorious name by sparing a mortal enemy.

CROMWEL.

A glorious name, by God's blessing, I will erect, and all our fellow labourers shall rejoice at it: but I see better than they do the blow descending on them, and my arm better than theirs can ward it off. Noble, thy heart overflows with kindness for Charles Stuart: if he were at liberty tomorrow by thy intercession, he would sign thy death-warrant the day after, for serving the Commonwealth. A generation of vipers! There is nothing upright or grateful in them: never was there a drop of true Scotch blood in their veins. Indeed we have a clue to their bedchamber still hanging on the door, and I suspect that an Italian fidler or French valet has more than once crossed the current.

NOBLE.

That may be: nor indeed is it credible that any royal or courtly family has gone on for three generations without a spur from interloper. Look

at France! some stout Parisian saint performed the last miracle there *.

CROMWEL.

Now thou talkest gravely and sensibly: I could hear thee discourse thus for hours together.

NOBLE.

Hear me, Cromwel, with equal patience on matters more important. We all have our sufferings; why increase one another's wantonly? Be the blood Scotch or English, French or Italian, a drummer's or a buffoon's, it carries a soul upon its stream, and every soul has many places to touch at, and much business to perform, before it reaches its ultimate destination. Abolish the power of Charles; extinguish not his virtues. Whatever is worthy to be loved for any thing is worthy of preservation. A wise and dispassionate legislator, if any such should arise among men, will not condemn to death him who has done, or is likely to do, more service than injury to society. Blocks and gibbets are the nearest objects to ours, and their business is never with virtues or with hopes. Justice upon

* The birth of Louis XIV is somewhat like a miracle to true believers, while among sceptics the principal doubt is not whether the child was supposititious, but whether he was so after his birth or before.

earth has forgotten half her lesson, and repeats the other half badly. God commanded her to reward and to punish. She would tell you that punishment is the reward of the wicked, and that the rewards of the good belong to him, whose delight is their distribution in another place. She is neither blind, as some have represented her, nor clear-sighted: she is one-eyed, and looks fixedly and fondly with her one eye upon edge-tools and halters. The best actions are never recompensed, and the worst are seldom chastised. The virtuous man passes by without a *good morrow* from us, and the malefactor may walk at large where he will, provided he walk far enough from encroachment on our passions and their playthings.

Let us, Cromwel, in God's name, turn the laws to their right intention: let us render it the interest of all to love them and keep them holy. They are at present, both in form and essence, the greatest curse that society labours under; the scorn of the wicked, the consternation of the good, the refuge of those who violate, and the ruin of those who appeal to them.

CROMWEL.

You have paid, I see, chancery fees, Walter.

NOBLE.

I should then have paid not only what is exor-

bitant, but what is altogether undue. Paying a lawyer, in any court, we pay over again what we have paid before. If government has neglected to provide that our duties be taught us, and our lives, properties, and station in society, be secured, what right has it to one farthing from us? For what else have our forefathers and ourselves been taxed? for what else are magistrates of any kind appointed? There is an awfulness in symmetry which chastens even the wildest, and there is a terror in distortion at which they strike and fly. It is thus in regard to law.

Reverting to the peculiar case of Charles, in my opinion you are ill justified, by morality or policy, in punishing him capitally. The representatives of the people ought to superintend the education of their princes; where they have omitted it, the mischief and the responsibility rest with them. As kings are the administrators of the commonwealth, they must submitt their whole household to the national inspection: on which principle, the preceptors of their children should be appointed by parliament; and the pupils, until they have attained their majority, should be examined twice annually on the extent and on the direction of their studies, in the presence of seven men chosen out of the Commons-house by ballot. Nothing of the kind

having been done, and the principles of this unfortunate king having been distorted by a wrong education, and retained in their obliquity by evil counsellors, I would now, on the reclamation both of generosity and of justice, try clemency. If it fails, his adherents will be confounded at his perfidy, and expecting a like return for their services, will abandon him.

CROMWEL.

Walter, Walter! we laugh at speculators.

NOBLE.

Many indeed are ready enough to laugh at speculators, because many profit, or expect to profit, by established and widening abuses. Speculations toward evil lose their name by adoption: speculations toward good are for ever speculations, and he who hath proposed them is a chimerical and weak creature. Among the matters under this denomination I never find a cruel project, I never find an oppressive or unjust one: how happens it?

CROMWEL.

Proportions should exist in all things. Sovrans are paid higher than others for their office: they should therefor be punished more severely for abusing it, even if the consequences of this abuse were in nothing more grievous or extensive. We cannot clap them in the stocks conveniently, nor

whip them at the market-place. Where there is a crown there must be an axe: I would keep it there only.

NOBLE.

Lop off the rotten, press out the poisonous, keep well the rest. Let it suffice to have given this memorable example of national power and justice.

CROMWEL.

Justice is perfect; an attribute of God; we must not trifle with it.

NOBLE.

Should we be less merciful to our fellow creatures than to our domestic animals? Before we deliver them to be killed, we weigh their services against their inconveniences. On the foundation of policy, when we have no better, let us erect the trophies of humanity: let us consider that, educated in the same manner, and situated in the same position, we ourselves might have acted as reprovably. Abolish that for ever which must else for ever generate abuses; and attribute the faults of the man to the office, not the faults of the office to the man.

CROMWEL.

I abominate and detest kingship.

NOBLE.

I abominate and detest hangmanship; but in

certain stages of society both are necessary. Let them go together; we want neither now.

CROMWEL.

Prythee, Wat, since thou readest, as I see, the books of philosophers, didst thou ever hear of Digby's remedies by sympathy?

NOBLE.

Yes, formerly.

CROMWEL.

Well, now, I protest, I do believe there is something in them. To cure my headache, I must breathe a vein in the neck of Charles.

NOBLE.

Oliver, Oliver, others are wittiest over wine, thou over blood ... cold-hearted, cruel man.

CROMWEL.

Why, dost thou verily think me so, Walter? Perhaps thou art right in the main: but he alone who fashioned me in my mother's womb, and who sees things deeper than we do, knows that.

CONVERSATION VI.

ESCHINES

AND

PHOCION.

ESCHINES

AND

PHOCION.

ESCHINES.

O PHOCION, again I kiss the hand that hath ever raised up the unfortunate.

PHOCION.

I know not, Eschines, to what your discourse would tend.

ESCHINES.

Yesterday, when the malice of Demosthenes would have turned against me the vengeance of the people, by pointing me out as him whom the priestess of Apollo had designated, in declaring that the Athenians were unanimous, one excepted, did you not cry aloud, *I am that man; I approve of nothing you do?* That I see you again, that I can express to you my gratitude, these are your gifts.

PHOCION.

And does Eschines then suppose that I should not have performed my duty, whether he were alive or dead? To have removed from the envy of an ungenerous rival, and from the resentment of an inconsiderate populace, the citizen who possesses my confidence, the orator who defends my country, and the soldier who has fought by my side, was among those actions which are always well repaid. The line is drawn across the account: let us close it.

ESCHINES.

I am not insensible, nor have ever been, to the afflicted; my compassion has been excited in the city and in the field; but when have I been moved, as I am now, to weeping? Your generosity is more pathetic than pity or than pain; and at your eloquence, stern as it is, O Phocion, my tears gush like those warm fountains, which burst forth suddenly from some convulsion of the earth.

Immortal Gods! that Demades and Polyeuctus and Demosthenes should prevail in the council over Phocion! that even their projects for a campaign should be adopted, in preference to that general's who hath defeated Philip in every encounter, and should precipitate the war against the advice of a politician, by whose presages,

and his only, the Athenians have never been deceived!

PHOCION.

It is true, I am not popular.

ESCHINES.

Become so.

PHOCION.

It has been frequently and with impunity in my power to committ base actions; and I abstained: would my friend advise me at last to committ the basest of all? to court the favour of people I despise!

ESCHINES.

You court not even those who love and honour you. Thirty times and oftener have you been chosen to lead our armies, and never once were present at the assembly which elected you. Unparalleled glory! when have the Gods shewn any thing similar among men! Not Aristides nor Epaminondas, the most virtuous of mortals, not Miltiades nor Cimon, the most glorious in their exploits, not Codrus, great enough to redeem from contempt the name of king, enjoyed the favour of Heaven so uninterruptedly. No presents, no solicitations, no flatteries, no concessions: you never even asked a vote, however duly, customarily, and gravely.

PHOCION.

The highest price we can pay for anything is, to ask it: and to solicit a vote appears to me as base an action as to solicit a place in a will: it is not ours, and might have been another's.

ESCHINES.

A question unconnected with my visit now obtrudes itself; and indeed, Phocion, I have remarked heretofore, that an observation from you has made Athenians, on other occasions, forget their own business and debates, and fix themselves upon it. What is your opinion on the right and expediency of making wills?

PHOCION.

That it is neither expedient nor just to make them; and that the prohibition would obviate and prevent (to say nothing of duplicity and servility) much injustice and much discontent; the very two things against which every legislator should provide the most cautiously. General and positive laws should secure the order of succession, as far as unto the grandchildren of brother and sister: beyond and out of these, property of every kind should devolve to the commonwealth.

Thousands have remained unmarried, that, by giving hopes of legacies, they may obtain votes for public offices; thus being base and making others

so, defrauding the community of many citizens by their celibacy, and deteriorating many by their ambition. Luxury and irregular love have produced in thousands the same effect. They care neither about offspring nor about offices, but gratify the most sordid passions at their country's most ruinous expense. If these two descriptions of men were prohibited from appointing heirs at their option, and obliged to indemnify the republic for their inutility and nullity, at least by so insensible a fine as that which is levied on them after death, the members would shortly be reduced to few, and much of distress and indigence, much of dishonour and iniquity, would be removed from the people of Athens.

ESCHINES.

But services and friendships...

PHOCION.

are rewarded by friendships and services.

ESCHINES.

You have never delivered your opinion upon this subject before the people.

PHOCION.

While passions and minds are agitated, the fewer opinions we deliver before them the better. We have laws enough; and we should not accustom men to changes. Although many things might be altered and improved, yet alteration in

state-matters, important or unimportant in themselves, is always grave and weighty in their complex and their consequences.

A little car in motion shakes all the houses of a street: let it stand quiet, and you or I could almost bear it on our foot without flinching. It is thus with institutions.

ESCHINES.

On wills you have excited my inquiry, rather than satisfied it: you have given me new thoughts, but you have also made room for more.

PHOCION.

Eschines, would you take possession of a vineyard or olive-ground which nobody had given to you?

ESCHINES.

Certainly not.

PHOCION.

Yet if it were bequeathed by will, you would?

ESCHINES.

Who would hesitate?

PHOCION.

In many cases the just man.

ESCHINES.

In some indeed.

PHOCION.

There is a parity, in all, between a will and my hypothesis of vineyard or olive-ground.

Inheriting by means of a will, we take to ourselves what nobody has given.

ESCHINES.

Quite the contrary: we take what he has given who does not deprive himself of any enjoyment or advantage by his gift.

PHOCION.

Again I say it, we take it, Eschines, from no giver at all; for he whom you denominate the giver does not exist: he who does not exist can do nothing, can accept nothing, can exchange nothing, can give nothing.

ESCHINES.

He gave it while he was living, while he had, in short, all these powers and faculties.

PHOCION.

If he gave it while he was living, then it was yours while he was living; it was not what lawyers, and jurists, and legislators, call a will or testament, on which alone we spoke.

ESCHINES.

True; I yield.

PHOCION.

The absurdities we do not see are more numerous and greater than those we discover; for truly there are few imaginable that have not crept from some corner or other into common use, and these

escape our notice by familiarity. Our best friends are displeased at us if we touch them: they would rather you stripped the tapestry off their walls, or called their children ugly.

ESCHINES.

We pass easily over some inequalities, which, if we were not habituated to them, would break our necks; while other much smaller shake and shock us. He who leaps down resolutely, nine or ten feet, from a crag of Anchesmus, may be lamed perhaps for life by missing a step in the descent from a temple.

Again, if you please, to our first question.

PHOCION.

I would exchange it willingly for any other, if you had not dropped something out of which I collect, that you think me rather indifferent to the administration of public affairs.

Indifference to the welfare of our country is a crime; but if our country is reduced to a condition in which the bad are preferred to the good, the foolish to the wise, hardly any catastrophe is to be deprecated or opposed that may shake them from their places.

ESCHINES.

In dangerous and trying times they fall naturally and necessarily, as flies drop out of a curtain let

down in winter. Should the people demand of me what better I would propose than my adversaries, such are the extremities to which their boisterousness and levity have reduced us, I can return no answer. We are in the condition of a wolf biting off his leg to escape from the trap that has caught it.

PHOCION.

Calamities have assaulted mankind in so great a variety of attacks, that nothing new can be devised against them. He who would strike out a novelty in architecture, commits a folly in safety; his house and he may stand; he who attempts it in politics, carries a torch, from which at the first narrow passage we may expect a conflagration. Experience is our only teacher both in war and peace. As we formerly did against the Lacedemonians and their allies, we might by our naval superiority seize or blockade the maritime towns of Philip; we might conciliate Sparta, who has outraged and defied him; we might wait even for his death, impending from drunkenness, lust, ferocity, and inevitable in a short space of time, from the vengeance to which they expose him at home. It is a dangerous thing for a monarch to corrupt a nation yet uncivilized; to corrupt a civilized one is the wisest thing he can do.

ESCHINES.

I see no reason why we should not send an executioner to release him from the prison-house of his crimes, with his family to attend him. Kings play at war unfairly with republics: they can only lose some earth and some creatures that they value as little; while republics lose in every soldier a part of themselves. Therefor no wise republic ought to be satisfied, unless she bring to punishment the individual most obnoxious, and those about him who may be supposed to have made him so, his counselors and his courtiers. Retaliation is not a thing to be feared. The Locrians have admitted only two new laws in two hundred years; because he who proposes to establish or to change one, comes with a halter round his throat, and is strangled if his proposition is rejected. Let wars, which ought justly to be more perilous to the adviser, be but equally so: let those who engage in them perish if they lose, I mean the principals, and new wars will be as rare among others as new laws among the Locrians.

PHOCION.

Both laws and wars are much addicted to the process of generation. Philip, I am afraid, has prepared the Athenians for his goverment; and yet I wonder how, in a free state, any man of

common sense can be bribed. The corrupter would only spend his money on persons of some calculation and reflexion: with how little of either must those be endowed, who do not see that they are paying a perpetuity for an annuity! Suppose that they, amidst suspicions both from him in whose favour, and from those to whose detriment, they betray, can enjoy every thing they receive, yet what security have their children and dependents? Property is usually gained in hope no less of bequeathing than of enjoying it; how certain is it that these will lose more than was acquired for them! If they lose their country and their laws, what have they? The bribes of monarchs will be discovered by the receiver to be like pieces of furniture given to a man who, on returning home, finds that his house, in which he intended to place them, has another master. I can conceive no bribery at all seductive to the most profligate, short of that which establishes the citizen bribed among the members of an hereditary aristocracy, which in the midst of a people is a kind of foren state, where the spoiler and traitor may take refuge. Now Philip is not so inhuman, as, in case he should be the conqueror, to inflict on us so humiliating a punishment. Our differ-

ences with him are recent, and he marches from policy not from enmity. The Lacedemonians did indeed attempt it, in the imposition of the thirty tyrants; but so monsterous a state of degradation and of infamy roused us from our torpour, threw under us and beneath our view all other wretchedness, and we recovered (I wish we could retain it as easily!) our independence.... What depresses you?

ESCHINES.

Oh! could I embody the spirit I receive from you, and present it in all its purity to the Athenians, they would surely hear me with as much attention, as that invoker and violator of the Gods, Demosthenes, to whom my blood would be the most acceptable libation at the feasts of Philip. Pertinacity and clamorousness, he imagines, are tests of sincerity and truth; although we know that a weak orator raises his voice higher than a powerful one, as the lame raise their legs higher than the sound. Can any thing be so ridiculous as the pretensions of this man, who, because I employ no action, says *action is the first, the second, the third requisite of oratory*, while he himself is the most ungraceful of our speakers, and, even in appealing to the Gods, begins by scratching his head?

PHOCION.

This is surely no inattention or indifference to the powers above. Great men lose somewhat of their greatness by being near us; ordinary men gain much. As we are drawing nigh to humble buildings, those at a distance beyond them sink below: but we may draw so nigh to the grand and elevated as to take in only a small part of the whole. I smile at reflecting on the levity, with which we contemporaries often judge of those great authors, whom posterity will read with incessant admiration: such is Demosthenes. Differ as we may from him in politics, we must acknowledge that no language is clearer, no thoughts more natural, no words more proper, no combinations more unexpected, no cadences more diversified and harmonious. Accustomed to consider as the best what is at once the most simple and emphatic, and knowing that whatever satisfies the understanding, conciliates the ear, I think him little if at all inferior to Aristoteles in style, although in wisdom he is as a mote to a sunbeam; and superior to my master Plato, excellent as he is; gorgeous indeed, but becomingly, like wealthy monarchs. Defective however and faulty must be the composition in prose, which you and I with our utmost study and attention cannot un-

derstand. In poetry it is not exactly so: the greater part of it must be intelligible to the multitude; but in the very best there is often an undersong of sense, which none beside the poetical mind, or one deeply versed in its mysteries, can comprehend. Euripides and Pindar have been blamed by many, who perceived not that the arrow drawn against them fell on Homer.

Let us praise, my Eschines, whatever we can reasonably: nothing is less laborious or irksome, no office is less importunate or nearer a sinecure. Above all others praise those who contend with you for glory, since they have already borne their suffrages to your judgment by entering on the same career. Deem it a peculiar talent, and what no three men in any age have possessed, to give each great citizen or great writer his just proportion of applause. A barbarian king or his eunuch can distribute equally and fairly beans and lentils; but I perceive that Eschines himself finds a difficulty in awarding just commendations.

A few days ago an old woman, who wrote formerly a poem on Codrus, such as Codrus with all his self-devotion would hardly have read to save his country, met me in the street, and taxed me with injustice towards Demosthenes.

You do not know him, said she: *he has heart*,

and somewhat of genius: true, he is singular and eccentric; yet I assure you I have seen compositions of his that do him credit. We must not judge of him from his speeches in public: there he is violent; but a billet of his, I do declare, is quite a treasure.

Lady, replied I, *Demosthenes is fortunate to be protected by the same cuirass as Codrus.*

The commendations of these people are not always, what you would think them, left-handed and detractive: for singular must every man appear who is different from his neighbours; and he is the most different from them who is the most above them. If the clouds were inhabited by men, the men must be of other form and features than those on earth, and their gait would not be the same as upon the grass or pavement. Diversity no less is contracted by the habitations, as it were, and haunts, and exercises of our minds. Singularity, when it is natural, requires no apology; when it is affected, is detestable: such is that of our young people in bad handwriting. On my expedition to Byzantium, the city decreed that a cloak should be given me worth forty drachmæ: and when I was about to return I folded it up carefully, in readiness for any service in which I might be employed hereafter. An officer, studious to

imitate my neatness, packed up his in the same manner, not without the hope perhaps that I might remark it, and my servant, or his, on our return, mistook it. I sailed for Athens; he, with a detachment, for Heraclea; whence he wrote to me that he had sent my cloak, requesting his own by the first conveyance. The name was quite illegible, and the carrier, whoever he was, had pursued his road homeward: I directed it then, as the only safe way, if indeed there was any safe one, *to the officer who writes worst at Heraclea.*

Come, a few more words upon Demosthenes. Do not, my friend, inveigh against him, lest a part of your opposition be attributed to envy. How many arguments is it worth to him, if you appear to act from another motive than principle! True, his eloquence is imperfect: what among men is not? In his repartees there is no playfulness, in his voice there is no flexibility, in his action there is neither dignity nor grace: but how often has he stricken you dumb with his irony! how often has he tossed you from one hand to the other with his interrogatories! Concentrated are his arguments, select and distinct and orderly his topics, ready and unfastidious his expressions, popular his allusions, plain his illustrations, easy the swell and subsidence of his periods, his dialect purely attic.

Is this no merit? Is it none in an age of idle rhetoricians, who have forgotten how their fathers and mothers spoke to them?

I have observed in Demosthenes and Thucydides, that they lay it down as a rule, never to say what they have reason to suppose would occurr to the auditor and reader, in consequence of any thing said before, knowing that every one is more pleased and more easily led by us, when we bring forward his thoughts indirectly and imperceptibly, than when we elbow them and outstripp them with our own. The sentences of your adversary are stout and compact as the Macedonian phalanx, animated and ardent as the sacred band of Thebes. Praise him, my Eschines, if you wish to be victorious; if you acknowledge that you are vanquished, then revile him and complain. In composition I know not any superior to him; and in an assembly of the people he derives advantages from his defects themselves, from the violence of his action, and from the vulgarity of his mien. Permitt him to possess these advantages over you: consider him as a wrestler, whose body is robust, but whose feet rest upon something slippery: use your dexterity, and reserve your blows. Regard him, if less excellent as a statesman, citizen, or soldier, rather as a genius or demon, who, whether beneficent or

malignant, hath, from an elevation far above us, launched forth many new stars into the firmament of mind*.

ESCHINES.

O, that we had been born in other days! The best men always fall upon the worst.

PHOCION.

The Gods have not granted us, Eschines, the choice of being born when we would; that of dying when we would, they have. Thank them for it, as one among the most excellent of their gifts, and remain or go, as utility or dignity may require. Whatever can happen to a wise and virtuous man from his worst enemy, whatever is most dreaded by the inconsiderate and irresolute, has happened to him frequently from himself, and not only without his inconvenience, but without his observation. We are prisoners as often as we bolt our doors, exiles as often as we walk to Munychia, and dead as often as we sleep. It would

* Such was the modesty of Phocion, whose eloquence many preferred. It is impossible to doubt that he, who in eloquence was equal to Demosthenes, in courage and philosophy to Socrates, in generalship to Philip, in equity to Aristides, in modesty to Timoleon, was, beyond a competition, the greatest man that ever existed: it is equally impossible to name the second.

be a folly and a shame to argue that these things are voluntary, and that what our enemy imposes are not: they should be the more so if they befall us from necessity, unless necessity be less a reason with us than caprice. In fine, Eschines, I shall then call the times bad when they make me so: at present they are to be borne, as must also be the storm that follows them.

CONVERSATION VII.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

AND

CECIL.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

AND

CECIL.

ELIZABETH.

I ADVISE thee again, churlish Cecil, how that our Edmund Spenser, whom thou callest most uncourteously a whining whelp, hath good and solid reason for his complaint. God's blood! shall the lady that tieth my garter and shuffles the smock over my head, or the lord that steddieth my chair's back while I eat, or the other that looketh to my buck-hounds lest they be mangy, be holden by me in higher esteem and estate, than he who hath placed me among the bravest of past times, and will as safely and surely set me down among the loveliest in the future.

CECIL.

Your Highness must remember he carouseth

fully for such deserts... a hundred pounds ayear of unclipt monies, and a butt of canary wine*.

ELIZABETH.

The monies are not enow to sustain a pair of grooms and a pair of palfreys, and more wine hath been drunken in my presence at a feast. The monies are given to such men, that they may not incline nor be obligated to any vile or lowly occupation; and the canary, that they may entertain such promising Wits as court their company and converse; and that in such manner there may be alway in our land a succession of these heirs unto Fame. He hath written, not indeed with his wonted fancifulness, nor in learned and majestical language, but in homely and rustic wise, some verses which have moved me; and haply the more so, inasmuchas they demonstrate to me that his genius hath been dampened by his adversities. Read them.

CECIL.

How much is lost when neither heart nor eye
Rosewinged Desire or fabling Hope deceives;
When boyhood with quick throb hath ceased to spy
The dubious apple in the yellow leaves;

* Calculating the prices of provisions and the increase of taxes, the poet-laureate in the time of Elizabeth had about four times as much as at present (1816); so that Cecil spoke reasonably, Elizabeth royally.

When, rising from the turf where youth reposed,
We find but deserts in the far-sought shore;
When the huge book of Faery-land lies closed,
And those strong brazen clasps will yield no more.

ELIZABETH.

The said Edmund hath also furnished unto the weaver at Arras, John Blanquieres, on my account, a description for some of his cunningest wenches to work at, supplied by mine own self indeed as far as the subject-matter goes, but set forth by him with figures and fancies, and daintily enow bedecked. I could have wished he had thereunto joined a fair comparison between Dian ... no matter ... he might perhaps have fared the better for it ... but poets' wits, God help them! when did they ever sit close about them! Read the poesy, not over-rich, and concluding very awkwardly and meanly.

CECIL.

Where forms the lotus, with its level leaves
And solid blossoms, many floating isles,
What heavenly radiance swiftdescending cleaves
The darksome wave! unwonted beauty smiles

On its pure bosom, on each bright-eyed flower,
On every nymph, and twenty sate around..
Lo! 'twas Diana .. from the sultry hour
Hither she fled, nor feared she sight nor sound.

Unhappy youth, whom thirst and quiver-reeds
Drew to these haunts, whom awe forbade to fly,
Three faithful dogs before him raised their heads,
And watched and wondered at that fixed eye.

Forth sprang his favorite.. with her arrow-hand
Too late the goddess hid what hand may hide,
Of every nymph and every reed complained,
And dashed upon the bank the waters wide.

On the prone head and sandaled feet they flew..
Lo! slender hoofs and branching horns appear!
The last marred voice not e'en the favorite knew,
But bayed and fastened on the upbraiding deer.

Far be, chaste goddess, far from me and mine
The stream that tempts thee in the summer noon!
Alas that vengeance dwells with charms divine..

ELIZABETH.

Psha! give me the paper: I forewarned thee how it ended.. pitifully, pitifully.

CECIL.

I cannot think otherwise than that the undertaker of the aforecited poesy hath choused your highness; for I have seen painted, I know not where, but I think no further off than Putney, the identically same Dian, with full as many nymphs, as he calls them, and more dogs. So

small a matter as a page of poesy shall never stirr my choler nor twitch my purse-string.

ELIZABETH.

I have read in Plinius and Mela of a runlet near Dodona, which kindled by approximation an unlighted torch and extinguished a lighted one. Now, Cecil, I desire no such a jetty to be celebrated as the decoration of my court: in simpler words, which your gravity may more easily understand, I would not from the fountain of Honour give lustre to the dull and ignorant, deadening and leaving in "cold obstruction" the lamp of literature and genius. I ardently wish my reign to be remembered: if my actions were different from what they are, I should as ardently wish it to be forgotten. Those are the worst of suicides, who voluntarily and propensely stab or suffocate their fame, when God has commanded them to stand on high for an ensample. We call him parricide who destroys the author of his existence: tell me, what shall we call him, who casts forth to the dogs and birds of prey, its most faithful propagator and most firm support? Mark me, I do not speak of that existence which the proudest must close in a ditch, the narrowest too of ditches, and the soonest filled and fouled, and whereunto a pinch of ratsbane or a poppyhead may bend

him; but of that which reposes on our own good deeds, carefully picked up, skilfully put together, and decorously laid out for us by another's kind understanding: I speak of an existence such as no father is author of, or provides for. The parent gives us few days and sorrowful; the poet many and glorious: the one (supposing him discreet and kindly) best reproves our faults; the other best remunerates our virtues.

A page of poesy is a little matter: be it so: but of a truth I do tell thee, Cecil, it shall master full many a bold heart that the Spaniard cannot trouble; it shall win to it full many a proud and flighty one, that even chivalry and manly comeliness cannot touch. I may shake titles and dignities by the dozen from my breakfast-board; but I may not save those upon whose heads I shake them from rottenness and oblivion. This year they and their sovran dwell together, next year they and their beagle. Both have names, but names perishable. The keeper of my privy-seal is an earl: what then? the keeper of my poultry-yard is a Cesar. In honest truth, a name given to a man is no better than a skin given to him: what is not natively his own, falls off and comes to nothing.

I desire in future to hear no contempt of pen-

men, unless a depraved use of the pen shall have so cramped them, as to incapacitate them for the sword and for the council-chamber. If Alexander was the great, what was Aristoteles who made him so? who taught him every art and science he knew, except three; those of drinking, of blaspheming, and of murdering his bosom-friends. Come along: I will bring thee back again nearer home. Thou mightest toss and tumble in thy bed many nights, and never eke out the substance of a stanza: but Edmund, if perchance I should call upon him for his counsel, would give me as wholesome and prudent as any of you. We should indemnify such men for the injustice we do unto them in not calling them about us, and for the mortification they must suffer at seeing their inferiors set before them. Edmund is grave and gentle: he complains of Fortune, not of Elizabeth, of courts, not of Cecil. I am resolved, so help me God, he shall have no further cause for his repining. Go, convey unto him those twelve silver spoons, with the apostols on them, gloriously gilded; and deliver into his hand these twelve large golden pieces, sufficing for the yearly maintenance of another horse and groom: beside which, set open before him with due reverence this bible, wherein he may read the mercies of God toward those who

waited in patience for his blessing; and this pair of cremesin silken hosen, which thou knowest I have worne only thirteen months, taking heed that the heelpiece be put into good and sufficient restauration, at my sole charges, by the Italian woman at Charing-cross.

CONVERSATION VIII.

KING JAMES I

AND

ISAAC CASAUBON.

KING JAMES I

AND

ISAAC CASAUBON*.

JAMES.

Good M. Casaubon, I am vexed and perturbed in spirit, to find that my moderation and my zeal,

* Casaubon, the four last years of his life, resided at the court of James I, and his opinion was consulted and his pen employed, when that religious king made proposals to the pope, for reconciling the Roman-catholic church with the catholic apostolic. He was singularly virtuous and pious, acute and learned; a liberal disputant, a sound critic. Among his friends he had the happiness of numbering a Thuanus, a Scaliger, a Douza, a Heinsius, a Taubmann, an Erpenius, a Gruter, a Beza, and a Grotius. Let no one hereafter hope ever to see, certainly none will ever live familiarly with, so many deserving so well of letters. He had written in France a treatise *De Libertate Ecclesiasticâ* of which 264 pp. were

which never has departed from it, should be opposed and thwarted by the Pontificials.

printed, when Henry IV, on the agreement of the Venetians with the pope, forbade the continuation, and attempted to suppress the commencement. Some copies escaped; and Goldast inserted the 264 pp. in the first volume of his *Monarchia Imperii.*

The learning of James rendered him not unworthy of Casaubon's notice. James was inglorious, for he was a Stuart; he was parsimonious, for he was a Scotchman; he was arrogant, for he was a theologian; and he was arbitrary, for he was educated in the doctrine of prerogative. No family in so many generations hath exhibited so few virtues: yet it would be unjust to deny that he was the best of his race; that he was sincere and candid, that he was temperate and compassionate, that he was patient and beneficent, and that he was the favourer, if not the remunerator, of learned men. Pompous as he was, he was less unbending than many constitutional kings have been; a practise which did not prevail in Europe until the minor potentates thought it becoming to imitate Louis XIV, and judiciously took that part of his character which was the easiest to copy. Unbendingness, in the moral as in the vegetable world, is an indication as frequently of unsoundness as of strength. Indeed wise men, whether kings or others, have been always free from it. Stiff necks are diseased ones. James conversed, on friendly and social terms, with many who never lied for him, never extorted for him, never extended his power, never pampered his pride, never pandered to his sensuality. He maintained the divine right of kings: we call the doctrine a monsterous one. Now those who *give*

CASAUBON.

Kings have been stript bare, and emperors unbreeched by popes, who followed them up into their very dreams, threatening them like disobedient children with rod in hand *.

constitutions, must possess a divine right; whence else comes it? We have seen these given near home, and we have applauded the giver.

Dari bonum quod potuit auferri potest.

James called himself catholic, and insisted that the appellation could not be refused him, who acknowledged as articles of faith the three creeds, the four Ecumenical Councils, and every doctrine received as necessary to salvation in the four first centuries of the faith. If the title was worth having, it was clearly his.

As in these Dialogues I have not inserted a single sentence written by, or recorded of, the personages who are supposed to hold them, I have thought it needful to subjoin occasional notes and illustrations. On the eighth in particular I shall exceed my usual bounds, recommending at the same time an attentive perusal of Casaubon's letters on the subject.

* Maximilianus Cæsar confessionem, a Lutheri discipulis conflatam, proceribus et Austriæ nobilitati concesserat, sed pontificis *denunciatione* perterritus nefarium diploma *revocavit*... Ferunt Cæsarem dixisse visum sibi, loquente legato pontificis, Pium flagellum intentantem. Pius V Elisabethæ Anglorum reginæ, catholicis infestæ, anathematis notam inussit, regnique jus ademit. Ad hæc perfecit ut Carolus IX rex Franciæ decretum Aurelianense *de libertate religionis* aboleret.

So that no promises, oaths, or treaties, are sacred with

Your Majesty could entertain but feeble hopes of accommodation, where avarice and pride are the directors of every counsel. The advantage however, which I pointed out to your Majesty, is obtained, inasmuchas you have hung your proofs upon the highest peg in the chambers of the Vatican, and these manifest to the world below you

Most Christian Kings; and even Cesars are super-Cesared by their tenants of the Vatican*.

On timorous and treacherous men, like these, depended, and still depend, the prosperity and improvement of mankind. Charles and Maximilian, the reverse of Achilles, abhorred the gates of Hell somewhat worse than falsehood. On this occasion the pope was introduced into the farce by them, and they prevailed on His Holiness that he should *oblige* them to loosen and throw aside their *obligations*. The princes of our times, very different from James, are unanimous in wishing the papacy to exist in the plenitude of power: the reasons are obvious. There is hardly one amongst them who hath not acted with the same duplicity as Maximilian and Charles, and with greatly more ingratitude to his people. No instrument or implement of tyranny is neglected or overlooked by them: popery makes, keeps in repair, and exercises all. So long as this pest exists on earth, religion will be a prostitute, civilization a starveling, and freedom a dishonoured outcast, a maimed beggar.

* The *Taxæ pœnitentiariæ*, the authority of which publication has been denied, were edited at Paris by Toussain Denis, 1520, and at Venice in *Oceanus juris*.

both the sincerity of your heart and the solidity of your arguments.

JAMES.

I could have wished that whatever leads to fellowship and concord were tolerated and encouraged. It is not the interest of kings to carry the forest-laws into churches. On this principle and persuasion I admitted many papists to offices about my person, not expecting that they would prepare for me such a blazing fire so early in the season: and after all, such is my spirit of peace and conciliation, though I would rather keep them out of my cellar and my kitchen, I should not however be loth to go with them, if their priests would allow me, to the communion-table. The Gospel says, *this is my body*: it does not say *how*. I am far from angry with the mass-maker for knowing more about it than I do, or than my master chose to tell my betters, his apostols and disciples, or for insisting on transubstantiation, the very name of which was not in existence for some hundred years after he left the earth. Let every christian take the sacrament: let all neighbours take it together: let each apply to it his own idea of its import and its essence. At every commemoration-dinner, one would wish something which he does not see upon the table, another is desirous

that the dish which stands before him were away; yet surely both may find that wherein their tastes agree; and nothing, of what is present or of what is absent, can alter their sentiments as to the harmony of the meeting or the object of the entertainment. Such feelings, let me ascend from the little to the great, from the ordinary to the solemn, will the christian's be at the sacrament of the eucharist. The memory of that day when it first was celebrated, makes me anxious to open my arms toward all, and to treat the enemies of my throne with the charity of the Gospel.

We gratify our humours in sovranty, in christianity our affections; in this always our best, in that often our worst. You know not, M. Casaubon, how pleasant a thing it is to converse naturally, because you have always done so; but we kings feel it sensibly, those at least amongst us to whom God hath vouchsafed a plain understanding. It is like unto a removal from the curtained and closed chamber of sickness, where every footfall is suspended and measured, every voice constrained and lowered, into our native air again, amidst the songs and pipings of our shepherds, and the wilder and more exuberant harmony of our woodlands. To you the whole intellectual world lies open: we must speak in epigrams or in oracles. The book

however which I hold in my hand, teaches me that the practice should be laid aside, and that we ought not to be ashamed of acknowledging a sort of relation, at home, with those whom in the house of God we call our brethren. If I fall rather short of this, I do not pretend to tell a man how he should sing, or how he should pronounce his language, or upon which side he should lie in bed, much less in what manner he should think on subjects which concern not me. I would exclude none from the benefit of law, none from the enjoyment of dignity: I would establish the catholic peers in that House, from which their friends Garnet and Catesby * would, to serve their own purposes, have exploded them. What think you?

CASAUBON.

I see not how your Majesty can receive as your counselors, or indeed as any part of those who are

* Garnettus vester a Catesbeio consultus, essetne licitum sontes insontesque perdere, si alteri sine alteris extingui non possent, semel ita respondit in privatis suis ædibus: *Licere, si tantum ex ea re boni proventurum esset, quantum aliquot insontium necem compensare potest.* So that murder may be committed even without advantage! The jesuit requires only a balance of good, and reckons the murder itself as merely an inoffensive means of obtaining it. Iterum in campis suburbanis, quibus a palude nomen, in hanc sententiam.. *et posse*

to govern, judge, or administrate, men who profess that another has by right a greater power in this realm, not only than your Majesty, but than all the three estates conjointly. They are bound to assist in placing the instruction of your people out of your hands: they are bound to murder you if you resist the authority of the pope, or even if they are informed by him that such an action is of advantage to the Church: indeed any one may murder you, let him only be persuaded by two or three factious but learned men* that it is conducive to the interests of His *Holiness*.

et licere cum sontibus insontes exsufflari, magnique adeo meriti rem fore, si id magno alicui bono catholicis caderet.

A few factious but learned men, deciding that such or such a thing is of great advantage to catholics, may, not only justly but with glory, blow up fifty or a hundred of their own *insontes* amongst two or three hundred heretics.

* The question was proposed and decided in the affirmative. It was not an idle or a speculative one, but prepared the minds of the Roman-catholics, and led the way to the murder of two kings, Henry III and Henry IV of France. The name of the former was inserted for *illustration*.. An liceat regem legitimum, *puta Henricum III Regem Galliarum Christianissimum, postquam a paucis seditiosis sed doctis cæperit tyrannus appellari*, occidere? Lamentable that the governments of Europe should have permitted such questions to be agitated by the clergy, to whom they least belong! It became them to imprison or punish capitally any pope who

JAMES.

I apprehend that my intentions must be deferred. O Lord! preserve my life for thy glory! preserve it for the union of Christians! Casaubon, it is verily, though we enter thereby into bliss, an ugly thing to die. The malignity of popery may soften. I should be sorry to inflict new pains and penalties.

CASAUBON.

I would not inflict any: I would authorize no inabilities or privations for a difference in mere

countenanced these universal rebels. Let those who invey so violently against the *Illuminati*, the *Carbonarj*, the *Radicals*, read the following language of the papal agents. The French regicide, Jaques Clement, a supremæ auctoritatis judicibus de causâ suscepti parricidii interrogatus, quum more patrio in reorum cellulâ sederet, non per ambages aut ænigmata sed liquidò et disertè respondit, ideo se quod fecerat fecisse, quia rex protestantibus Germaniæ principibus opem ferre parans in causâ Clivieusi, Pontifici Maximo *rem faceret ingratam, ac proinde dignus esset qui periret:* deum enim se in terris Romanum Pontificem agnoscere, cujus voluntati qui sese *quovis pacto* opponeret eum se habere exitio devotum. Ipsissima feralis illius prodigii verba sunt, *Papa est deus et deus est Papa*.. Happy that people whose Gods were leeks! religion did not teach them that perfidy and murder were virtues.

No treason of a priest against a king is criminal. Father Emanuel Sa, who has written *a guide to confessors*, says, Clerici rebellio in regem non est crimen læsæ majestatis, *quia*

articles of faith: for instance, it would be tyranny or madness to declare a man incapable of beating the enemy because he believes in transubstantiation: but I would exclude from all power, all trust, all office, whoever should assert that any man has legitimate power of any kind within this realm, unless it repose in, or originate from, the king or parliament or both united. The Council of Trent has defined and settled the questions at issue in the Roman-catholic creed, so that the

non est principi subjectus.. and again..Tyrannice gubernans justum acquisitum dominium non potest spoliari sine *publico judicio:* latâ vero sententiâ *potest quisque fieri executor*... Christ says, *My kingdom is not of this world:* the pope says, *My kingdom is.* Pius V excited to rebellion all the subjects of Elizabeth: Clement VIII (it is ludicrous to hear the titles of these ruffians) ordered all the Roman-catholics, quantum in ipsis esset, ut post Elizabethæ obitum rex *eligeretur,* omni sanguinis propinquitate spretâ. For this purpose it was requisite that the consciences of men should be modified; and hence arose *mental reservation,* to which all the abominations of all other religions, all even of popery itself, are trifles. Christ says, *let your discourse be yea, yea; nay, nay:* the jesuit says, supported by the pope, *the speech by equivocation being saved from a lie, the same speech may be without perjury confirmed by oath, or by any other way, though it were by receiving the sacrament, if just necessity so require.* Cannot a lie be circuitous? Whatever is said in order to make a man believe an untruth, is a lie; yet a jesuit has no hesitation to swear it upon the sacrament! and

popes can pretend to teach nothing new for the future: matters of discipline are likewise fixed. The appointment to ecclesiastical dignities of every degree may safely be entrusted to the native hierarchy in each kingdom. Your Majesty has then a right to demand from your Roman-catholic subjects, that no papal bull, no order, brief, decree, or mandate of any kind, hereafter be received in your dominions.

princes have no hesitation to let jesuits be the instructors of youth! Falsely, as my quotations prove, have they been called the supporters of thrones: they never support them, but when they can govern from them, by means of deluded or affrighted princes. The papacy is the guardian of governments as a bawd is the guardian of girls; for profit. Antonius Capellus, a Franciscan friar, says, Indignos esse reges qui ecclesiis suarum ditionum *ullo modo* praesint, quos Deus in Moyse sibi displicere apertè commonstravit. Eudæmono-Johannes, a monk of Crete, a true jesuit, extols the son of the Emperor Henry IV for insulting the dead body of his father, who had been disobedient to the See of Rome. The opinions of these men are not private; they are sanctioned *facultate superiorum*, by the doctors of theology, and by the chancery of the papal court. The spirit of their church has always been and always will be the same, whenever it can exercise its authority; arrogant, intolerant, persecuting, unforgiving. Its poison has been sublimated, and its froth and fumes have been condensed, by the Jesuits, as may further be seen in Mariana and in Escobar, and in the demonstration of their fallacies by Arnaud and Pascal.

It is singular and anomalous in the political world, that subjects should claim a right of appeal to foren princes; and it is absurd to argue that the appeal is made not to the prince but to the priest, when the person is invested with both characters, and acts in both*.

JAMES.

What should I think, if the fellows of Trinity college in Cambridge, or of Christchurch in Oxford, rose from table, and shut themselves in their common-room for the day, and sent me word the next morning that they had appointed a head of the church, enclosing his circular, wherin he ordereth my obedience? Verily, from pure good will, I should diet and scourge the knaves into their sounder senses, clapping up their head-piece, with his tiara on, in my fool's-hospital, and giving him the precedency in it he had claimed outside.

* It was determined in the council of the Lateran, by seventy archbishops, in the presence of the ambassadors of all the Christian princes, "that the *Holy See* held a jurisdiction *in every place*, that its authority extended over all, that it was empowered to decide the causes of princes, to deprive them of their government, and to conferr it on others." The French, in the fury of their revolution, and at the summit of their power, never claimed such despotic sway; yet their insolence united the whole world against them, and they were trampled in the dust.

And yet, M. Casaubon, the fellows of either college are better scholars and honester men, I trow, than your pediculous friars and partycoloured bald-coot priests, into whose frowsy bodies, incrusted with libidinousness and blood, enters that legion-spirit which overshadows and shakes the world. I have exorcized my three kingdoms; and by the Lord! if such spirit encroacheth, I will set those at him who shall leave him no easier a horn than Achelousis, and no more tail than I have.

CASAUBON.

It were an easy matter to prove that cardinal-deacons have no right to elect a pope; that they themselves were not a corporate body many centuries ago, much less an elective one, but rather so many gourds, sprung up in one dark night, with nobody then to heed, and nobody now to pluck them.

JAMES.

Ay, but they have tho.

CASAUBON.

Bishops, priests, and deacons, were instituted by the apostols; and what proves that, after their time, we had no earthly and visible head of the church, is this: after the decease of the twelve,

the provincial priests elected them, not without the suffrages of the people.

JAMES.

We may hold back this latter part, M. Casaubon! Saint Cyprian in several places, and particularly in his epistle to Felix the presbyter, testifies to this custom. A bishop thus elected was initiated into his ministery by the other bishops in the neighbouring dioceses; and it was decreed in the council of Nice, that not fewer than three of them should attend on this occasion. Bonifacius the third left the election to the priests and people, but usurped to himself the right of confirming it. Afterwards the emperor's will and pleasure were consulted, which Louis, the son of Charlemagne, was the first who waived. Cardinals were instituted by pope Marcellus, to bury and baptize.

CASAUBON.

This violation, mentioned by your majesty, of the ordinance made in the council of Nice, is not the only one. It was there determined that a bishop removed from a diocese could not be placed in another. Pope Antherus overturned this statute.

JAMES.

These people care neither for bishops, their

equals, nor for synods, their superiors. A pope, like the Glaucus of antiquity, has taken his leap, and from a fisherman is become a god. He may advise and enlighten; he may also command and *fulminate*... a favorite designation of one among the supernatural powers which he arrogates to himself from the Divinity. By a less exertion, he might transfuse in a perennial stream his wisdom and his holiness into a succession of bishops: hence appeals to Rome would be unnecessary. Power is always the more immoderate and the more jealous when it rises out of usurpation; but those who contend for liberty of any kind should in no instance be its abettors. If the popes had been conscientious or decently honest men, if they could have abstained from laughing in their sleeves when they called themselves the successors of Saint Peter, if they could have been contented with his mediocrity of fortune, his dignified and righteous exercise of authority, their influence upon sound consciences would have been greater and more permanent: and neither would rape and incest, and the abominations of Lampsacus and Crete, have been committed in their closets, under the images of the saints and under the lamp of the Virgin, nor would forbearance from evil and

activity in good be postponed to frogs and flounders, to horse-hair, hemp, and ashes, or prayers to the dead for the dead.

Infallibility was never claimed by the bishops of Rome, nor ever thought of, until they were sufficiently powerful for the assertion of any falsehood and any usurpation. Pope Honorius, in later times, gave his sanction to the Ecthesis of Sergius, which was also accepted by a synod convoked under him: it was declared heretical by his successors. Where was then infallibility?

CASAUBON.

The Cardinal Bellarmin, unable to confute the slightest of your remonstrances, came forward in his master's name, threw down the key of Peter and took up the sword, cutting short the question between you, and asserting *that the king of England was also in temporals the Pope's feudatory and subject*. After this, according to the constitution, your majesty may declare rebels, all adherents of the pope in any way whatever, all who hold direct or indirect communication with him, all who receive or give intelligence for the furtherance of his machinations and designs.

JAMES.

The pope has many true and just causes for hos-

tility against us: the truest and justest is this: the reformation has shewn that bishops are appointed by the secular power, tho selected by the spiritual, at least in form. Now, he may be frightened at the apparition of some mighty prince in armour, who, altho surrounded by the clouds and fogs of his native superstition, calls upon his own bishops to nominate one, and gives his sanction to their nomination. On this principle Rome may receive her bishop at his hands.

One thing is plain and demonstrable from the scripture, and admits no doubt nor equivocation, nor can it be interpreted with more or less force; which is, that the guides of christians must abstain altogether from political concerns.

CASAUBON.

May not that, sire, affect the bishops, as lords in parliament?

JAMES.

They sit there only to give their counsel on such discipline as may be propounded for the clergy. Hence they are called *lords spiritual*, two very good words, altho rather strange together.

If any one of mine in his pruriency should cast his wild eye askance, and ruffle his main and neigh and snort to overleap this boundary, I would thrust the bible into his mouth forthwith, and thereby

curb his extravagance. For, M. Isaac, we do possess this advantage: our bishops acknowledge in spirituals the sole authority of that sacred book; wheras your papist, when you push him, slinks off from it as he lists, now to one doctor, now to another, now to saint, now to father, now to confessor, and, as these retire from him and will have nothing to say to him or for him, he has recourse to tradition, which is anywhere or nowhere. If you follow him up into this *whispering-gallery*, and press him closer, he flies at your throat, and swears (by God's help) he will throstle you.

CASAUBON.

The English have reflected at all times more intensely on religion, than any other people in the universe, and began the earliest to examine its innovations and abuses. The *Trialogue* of Wicklif* is the first important work published in this country, and few more important have been published since.

JAMES.

I do not like Wicklif: he would make men equal: let me hear no more of him. Bishop Reginald Peacock went exactly far enough. He

* This book was first printed without date, and written about the year 1360. Peacock flourished a century later.

resisted the authority of the pope, and refuted the doctrine of transubstantiation, with several other papalities, and particularly those paganisms which Vigilantius, in ancient times, buffeted and exploded.

CASAUBON.

Among the various religions that have been established in the world, the papal is the only one which, as though it wished to ridicule and parody the Athanasian creed, insists that a kingdom shall have two *chief* magistrates*, that nevertheless one of these shall be *superior* to the other, and that he of right is so, who has never seen the country, never will see it, never had parentage or progeny

* Casaubon must here be supposed to mean, two magistrates each of whom pretended to power independently of the other. For in Sparta were two kings; and in Japan was a kind of pope, reported, by those who are interested in the parallel, to possess an equal authority with the emperor. Unquestionably, where any such magistrate exists, a short time is requisite for his growth into inordinate power: wherever there is an hierarchy there will be usurpation. The Japanese pope, or dairo, is reduced to order, and his chief legitimate privileges are, the keeping of twelve wives, with as many concubines as are necessary for the prosperity of the state and the interests of religion. The number of these, no doubt, would be diminished, if no serious danger were to be apprehended from the example of innovation, particularly in an age so prone to immorality and infidelity, and among a people of so little *unction* and *recueillement*.

or land or tenement in it; that a kingdom neither conquered nor hereditary, neither bequeathed nor surrendered by itself, must admitt an alien arbitrator whenever it pleases him to raise a question, and that this alien arbitrator shall always give an irreversible verdict in his own favour; lastly, that a kingdom, to the detriment of its defence, of its agriculture, of its commerce, of its population, of its independence, shall raise a body of men for the service of this intruder, unlimited in number, enormous in expenditure, which he alone shall discipline, he alone shall organize, he alone shall direct and controul. Mahomet left a family, and was far from deficient in impudence, but he wanted the assurance to claim for his own successors what the pretended ones of St. Peter claim for theirs: here however we have somewhat worse than common absurdity, or than common arrogance, to contend with. A harlot was not contented with debauching your servants, with getting drunk at your expense, and with picking your pocket of some loose money every time that you approached her: she became impatient for your strong-box and title-deeds, and invoked the blessed Virgin to witness that, unless she had them, you should never, as she hoped for salvation, leave the room alive. She now is angry that you have turned her off, is

ready to bring attestations by the thousand, that she is fairer and cleaner and safer than any other, reminds you, as peculiar to herself, that you may enjoy her as well asleep as awake, as well by proxy as in person, complains of your levity and violence, boasts of her sweet temper and affection and fidelity, pouts, pants, and swells, and swears that neither you nor yours shall enter her house again.

JAMES.

I see not therefor what we can do better, than to cut her laces and put her decently to bed, slipping out of the door with as little noise as possible.

CASAUBON.

Rather act so in every case, than exchange a pledge with the perfidious, or reason with the unreasonable.

Nicodemus asked our Saviour *how can these things be?* and his divine instructor heard and answered him with complacency: put the same question to his vicar, issuing from some mountain monastery or some suburban lane, and the fellow will illuminate you with a cartful of faggots.

JAMES.

The French displayed, long before the English, a resolution to defend the prerogatives of royalty against the usurpations of the Popedom. To omitt the vigour and firmness of Philip le bel, who burned

the bull of Bonifacius the eighth in the streets of Paris, by the hands of the hangman, and, having seized *his Holiness* at Anagni, would have treated him with as little ceremony had he not been rescued, in times nearer our own Giovanni Bonacurci, of Lucca, published, under the reign of Louis the twelfth, a proposition that the pope was above the king in temporals. The parliament of Paris condemned him to be stript of his canonical dress, to put on one of green and yellow, to carry a candle of the same colour, to confess before the image of the Virgin Mary, *that his proposition was contrary to the Roman-catholic religion*, and to ask pardon of the king, of justice, and of the people.. of the people, because he had put their souls in danger: else the parliament of Paris was always most discreet in its consignment of liberty; not leaving any, where it might do harm, and placing it abundantly in the king's treasury to be distributed at his royal will and pleasure. The doctors of that country, and none but doctors and princes are fit to handle the subject, are unanimous that law and liberty, like offices and honours, can emanate only from the throne. I throw out this in friendship and generosity, M. Casaubon, feeling that you, born and educated as you were at Geneva, might think erroneously upon a point which the

nicest hand cannot separate from religion, and loving you with all my heart, and most anxious for your welfare and salvation.

CASAUBON.

Sire, I will think thereupon.

JAMES.

Friend Casaubon, do you speak in the royal sense of the word or in the popular? We kings, when we say to parliament or other folks that we will think upon anything, mean always that we will dismiss it from our thoughts.

CASAUBON.

That would not be easy to do with the words of your Majesty.

JAMES.

I can never be surprised at any atrocity committed by this sect, the only one since the creation of the world by which fratricide has been protected. Juan Diaz, in the memory of some now living*, was murdered in Nuremberg, at the instigation of his brother Alfonso, for having adopted the doctrine of the apostols in preference to the glosses of the popes. His murderers were imprisoned in the jail of Inspruck: the emperor Charles V stopped the proceedings, under the pretext that he himself would take cognisance of them at the

* 1545.

approaching diet. I know not whether the facts have been divulgated.

CASAUBON.

The whole history of the assassination has been published in latin, under the name of Claudius Senarclæus. I possess one of the few copies that have escaped the searches made in order to suppress them.

JAMES.

Is it not wonderful that, odious and contemptible as the Italians are to all the other nations of Europe, when hardly the first amongst them, unless it be the son of some Venetian senator, can find access to the family of any gentleman in England, yet an ignorant, vicious, and ferocious priest, covered with filth and vermin, being hailed as another God by some dozens of the same cast, instantly treats kings as his inferiors and subjects, and is obeyed in a country like this, highminded, free, and enlightened? Is there anything more irrational or more humiliating in the worship of the Delai-Lama? Far otherwise: he is innocent, gentle, and beneficent, no murderer, no instigator to assassinations, no approver of massacres*, no

* Medals were coined by order of Gregory XIII to commemorate Saint Bartholomew's day: on one side is the pope, on the other is the slaughter. He commanded it also to be

plunderer, no extortioner, no vender of pardons, no dealer in dispensations, no forestaller and re-

painted in the Vatican, where the painting still exists. In popes no atrocity is marvelous or remarkable; but how painful is it to find a scholar like Muretus exulting in a massacre! The following words are part of an oration addressed by him to Gregory, in the name of Charles IX, on the celebration of this truly French festival.

O noctem illam memorabilem, et in fastis eximiæ alicujus notæ adjectione signandam, quæ *paucorum seditiosorum* interitu regem a præsenti cædis periculo, regnum a perpetuâ civilium bellorum formidine, liberavit! Quâ quidem nocte stellas equidem ipsas luxisse solito nitidiùs arbitror, et flumen Sequanam majores undas volvisse, quo citiùs illa impurorum hominum cadavera evolveret et exoneraret in mare! O felicissimam mulierum Catharinam regis matrem! &c.

Such are the expressions of Muretus, as the most agreeable he could deliver, to the successor of him who proclamed *on earth peace, good will toward men.* This language of Charity had been corrected by Infallibility, and altered to *pax hominibus .. bonæ voluntatis:* terms on which a massacre is a commentary.

Horatius Tursellinus, another eminent scholar, quoted before, is also another proof among thousands, that literature, the tamer and subduer of barbarism, cannot penetrate a heart immersed in this searing superstition. His words on the same occasion are these: Gregorius XIII deinde pontifex summus patrum studiis electus; *cujus pontificatûs initia lætiora lætus de Parisiensi Hugonotorum cæde nuncius fecit.* Per occasionem nuptiarum regis Navarri, Calviniani proceres jussu Franci regis oppressi ... ad LX millia Parisiis cæsa

grater of manna from heaven or of palms from paradise, no ringdropper of sacraments, no scourer of incests, no forger, betrayer.

O Casaubon, I blush to reflect that dissimulation is necessary to the maintenance of peace. A rotten rag covers worse rottenness: remove it, and half the world is tainted with infidelity. In England, in Holland, in any country where laws

traduntur. Treachery in the mask of Festivity, Murder in that of Religion, are thus congratulated and applauded. Tursellinus is not so rapturous as Muretus, for he was not a Frenchman; but he counts the number of the victims with a sedate and calm pleasure, for he was a Jesuit. Henricus Spondanus, in his *Auctarium ad Annales Baronii*, represents a similar scene on a smaller scale, exhibited two centuries ago in the Valtellina, under the auspices of the duke of Feria, governor of the Milanese for the Spanish king. Catholici, mense Julio, omnes Calvinistas, tam incolas quàm exteros, occidunt.

Almost the only good, I should rather say almost the only cessation of evil, permitted by catholic princes, is the abolition of the jesuits, which must however be considered as merely the dismissal of old servants grown insolent. They still maintained and supported the Inquisition. During the period of these two institutions, more mischief has been done to mankind by their religion, not merely than by all the other religions that have existed in the world, but than by all the other causes of evil put together. The jesuits taught youth, but only to a certain and very circumscribed extent, and their

are equitable and morals pure, how often would these *Eminences* and *Holinesses* have clasped the whipping-post, and with how much more fervency than they clasp the cross! Bellarmin must have been convinced: he must have struggled against his conscience: heated with that conflict, he advances the more outrageously against me.

principal dogma was, the legitimacy of falsehood: hence knowledge and virtue have suffered worse from them, than from the most profligate and ignorant of the other confraternities.

Catholicism is the cause, we are informed, why sculpture and painting were revived: it is more certainly the cause why they have made no progress, and why they have been employed on ignoble objects; on scourgers and hangmen, on beggarly enthusiasts and base impostors. Look at the two masterpieces of the pencil; the Transfiguration of Raphael and the St. Jerome of Coreggio: can anything be more incongruous, anything more contrary to truth and history? I am persuaded that the little town of Sicyon produced a greater number of great artists in both arts than all the modern world. The painters of Sicyon are less celebrated than the sculptors: but sculpture was never brought to perfection anywhere, until drawing was; and we may be instructed in our own school, how much the rarer and more difficult is this part. In landscape only, where superstition has no influence, are the moderns to be thought on a level with the ancients. Claude and Titian were probably not excelled.

CASAUBON.

Bellarmin throws all your arguments into the fire, and assumes a fiercer attitude, not from any resentment at being convinced, for that he was long before, but on the principle that, when we are tired of parrying, we thrust. Your Majesty has now a declared competitor for the throne. Parliament will provide, if the statute of queen Elizabeth is insufficient, the means necessary to maintain your possession. On the compliance of your Roman-catholic subjects with such conservatory statutes, nothing can be so unjust or so needless, as to exclude from the rights of citizenship, or from the dignities of state, a body of men who believe not differently from your Majesty, but more.

Popery is an amalgam of every religion and every institution by which mankind in all countries under heaven had been subjugated. Not only the Egyptian and Syrian, the Bramanic and Persian, the Phrygian and Greek, but even the Druidical, was found useful in its structure; and thereupon were erected the fulminating batteries of Excommunication. This, which satisfied and satiated the ferocity of the most ferocious race among men, satisfied not the papal priesthood.

They conducted their Inquisition far beyond it, extinguishing, as they went, all other lights than such as served for illusion. In Spain they succeded perfectly; nearly so in Italy; in France the machine stuck and miscarried: the vivacity and courage of the French, and their felicity in ridicule and mimicry, kept them up from suffocation and submersion. The strong moral principle of the English, their serious temper, their habit of long reflexion, their unreserved confidence one in another, their dauntless practice of delivering their opinions, their liberality in accepting and exchanging them, and, upon these, the attempering countenance of your Majesty, will deprive the papal poison of its circulation and activity. Threats are yet murmured: but if your Majesty will cease to notice them, they will die away. There is no echo but from repercussion; no repercussion but from some place higher than the voice. The scourge of reason and humanity, left upon the ground awhile, will break in the hand of the first who strikes hard therewith: it has already lost much of its weight and suppleness*.

* I know not what could be published more useful or more important in the present times, than a small unostentatious volume, tracing and exposing the progress of papal usurpation. South America in particular should be informed that

Casaubon here finished his discourse, and James made no further observation. Such was his simplicity, he really had imagined that reason and truth, urged so forcibly by him, would alter the system and conciliate the goodwill of the papal court, and that it would resign a wide dominion for a weighty argument. He stroaked his beard, licked softly the extremities of his whiskers, ejaculated, sighed, and sate down quietly. He was, notwithstanding, in a frame of mind capable of receiving with satisfaction whatever could derogate from the dignity of the Roman-catholic rites, when Archibald Pringle, one of his pages, entered the apartment.

the catholic church was not originally what it now is, and was not so for many centuries: that her republics can, consistently with their duties as catholic, cease to be papal, cease to be the subjects of Rome no less easily and rightfully than of Spain: that they can elect, appoint, and consecrate at home, their own bishops, and spiritual head, if they want or will admitt one: that synods have decreed and ordered such election: and that their decrees and orders, in matters of discipline, are binding on all catholics .. a momentous truth, which the popes themselves have admitted, altho they appear to have done so with no other end than for its abuse and violation.

" Archy," said his Majesty, who was fond of such abbreviations, " I remember to have chidden you for a wicked little story you told me last winter, touching a Japonese at Rouen. Come now, if you can divest it of irreverence, I would fain hear it repeated. I think it a subject for the disquisition of my bishops, whether the pagan sinned or not, or whether, if he sinned, his faith was of a nature to atone for it."

Such were really, if not the first thoughts, those however which now arose in the king's mind... The page thus began his narration.

A young Japonese was brought over to Rouen on the day of Pentecoste. He had expressed in the voyage a deep regret at the death of the chaplain, who might have instructed him in the mysteries, and who, the only time he conversed with him, recommended to him zealously and with *unction*, as the French say, the worship of the living God. He was constant in his desire to be edified, and immediately on his debarkation was conducted to the cathedral. He observed the elevation of the Hoste with imperturbable devotion, and an utter indifference to the flattering whispers of the fairest among the faithful.. such as, *O the sweet jonquil-coloured skin! O the pretty piercing black eyes! O the charming long*

twisted tail! and how finely those flowers and birds and butterflies are painted upon his trowsers! and look at that leopard in the centre! it seems alive.

When the service was over, and the Archbishop was mounting his carriage-step, he ran after him, and bit him gently, with eyes half-closed, by the calf of the leg. Vociferations were raised by the attendents, the soldiers, and the congregation, ill accordant with sanctity, and wronging the moral character and pious disposition of the Japonese. These however the good prelate quieted, by waving his hand, and smiling with affability. The neophyte was asked what induced him to bite the archbishop by the leg: he answered, that he wished to pay the living God the same reverence and adoration, as the living God had paid the dead one.

"See now," cried James, "the result of proclaming that the pope is God upon earth. It led this poor heathen, who amid such splendour and prostrations might well mistake an archbishop for a pope, to the verge of an abyss, dark, precipitous, and profound, as any that superstition hath opened in his own deplorable country."

CONVERSATION IX.

MARCHESE PALLAVICINI

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

MARCHESE PALLAVICINI

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

At Albaro near Genoa I rented the palace of Marchese Pallavicini. While he was presenting the compliments on my arrival, the wife of his bailiff brought me fish and fowl from the city, and poured upon the table a basketful of fine fruit.

LANDOR.

The walk has tired you, my good woman. The hill indeed is rather steep, but it is short, and you appear, like the generality of Genoese country-women, strongly built.

PALLAVICINI.

She has been frightened. When the Neapolitans and English landed here in the Bay, she was in childbed.

LANDOR.

Poor woman! the alarm must have been great

indeed, before you knew that the general was an Englishman.

Ah, sir! was all she replied.

Signor marchese, do inform me what she means.

PALLAVICINI.

It is better to forget if we can the calamities of war, which usually are the greatest in the most beautiful countries.

LANDOR.

Indulge me however in my request. Curiosity is pardonable in a stranger, and, led by humanity, is admissible to confidence.

PALLAVICINI.

You had begun, sir, to say something which interested me, in reply to my inquiry how you liked our scenery. I shall derive much more satisfaction from your remarks on our architecture and gardens, than you can derive from my recital of any inhumanity. It is fair and reasonable, and in the course of things, that we should first arrive at that which may afford us pleasure, and not flag toward it wearied and saddened, and incapable of its enjoyment.

LANDOR.

I am pleased, as I observed, by the palace opposite, not having seen in Italy, until now, a house of any kind with a span of turf before it.

Like yours and your neighbour's, they generally encroach on some lane, following its windings and angles, lest a single inch of ground should be lost; and the roofs fight for the centre of the road. I am inclined to believe that the number of houses whose fronts are uneven, is greater than of those whose fronts are even, and that there are more cramped with iron than uncramped. These deformities are always left visible, though the house be plaistered, that the sum expended on the iron and labour may be evident. If an Italian spends a livre, he must be seen to spend it: his stables, his laundry, his domestics, his peasants, must strike the eye together: his pigstie must have witnesses like his will. Every tree is accursed, as that of which the holy cross was fabricated, and must be swept away. You are surely the most hospitable people in the world: even that edifice which derives its existence and its name from privacy, stands exposed and wide-open to the stranger.

When I resided on the Lake of Como, I visited the palace of Marchese Odeschalchi. Before it swelled in majesty that sovran of inland waters; behind it was a pond surrounded with brickwork, in which about twenty young goldfish jostled and gaped for room. The Larius had sapped the foundations of his palace, and the marchese had

exerted all his genius to avenge himself: he composed this bitter parody. I inquired of his cousin Don Pepino, who conducted me, when the roof would be put on. He looked at me, doubting if he understood me, and answered in a gentle tone, *It was finished last summer.* My error originated from observing red pantiles, kept in their places by heavy stones, loose, and laid upon them irregularly.

What a beautiful swell, Don Pepino, is this upon the right, exclamed I. *The little hill seems sensible of pleasure as he dips his foot into the Larius.*

There will be the offices.

What! and hide Grumello? Let me enjoy the sight while I can. He appears instinct with life, nodding the network of vines upon his head, and beckoning and inviting us, while the figtrees and mulberries and chesnuts and walnuts, and those lofty and eternal cypresses, stand motionless around. His joyous mates, all different in form and features, push forward; and, if there is not something in the air, or something in my eyesight, illusory, they are running a race along the borders... Stop a moment: how shall we climb over these two enormous pines? Ah, Don Pepino! old trees in their living state are the only

things that money cannot command. Rivers leave their beds, run into cities, and traverse mountains for it; obelisks and arches, palaces and temples, amphitheatres and pyramids, rise up like exhalations at its bidding; even the free spirit of Man, the only thing great on earth, crouches and cowers in its presence ... it passes away and vanishes before venerable trees. What a sweet odour is there! whence comes it? sweeter it appears to me and stronger than of the pine itself.

I imagine, said he, *from the linden; yes certainly.*

Is that a linden? It is the largest, and, I should imagine, the oldest upon earth, if I could perceive that it had lost any of its branches.

Pity that it hides half the row of yon houses from the palace! It will be carried off with the two pines in the autumn.

O Don Pepino, cried I; *the French, who abhorr whatever is old and whatever is great, have spared it; the Austrians, who sell their fortresses and their armies, nay sometimes their daughters, have not sold it.. must it fall! Shall the cypress of Soma be without a rival? I hope to have left the neighbourhood before it happens; for, events which you will tell me ought never to interest me*

at all, not only do interest me, but make me (I confess it) sorrowful.

O who upon earth could ever cut down a linden! I should not dare to break a twig from off one. To a linden was fastened the son of William Tell, when the apple was cloven on his steady head. Years afterwards, how often did the father look higher and lower, and search laboriously, to descry if any mark were remaining of the cord upon its bark! how often must he have inhaled this very odour! what a refreshment to a father's breast! The flowers of the linden should be the only incense offered up in the churches to God. Happy the man, whose aspirations are pure enough to mingle with it!

How many fond and how many lively thoughts have been nurtured under this tree! how many kind hearts have beaten here! Its branches are not so numerous as the couples they have invited to sit beside it, nor its blossoms and leaves together as the expressions of tenderness it has witnessed. What appeals to the pure all-seeing heavens! what similitudes to the everlasting mountains! what protestations of eternal truth and constancy! . . from those who are now earth . . they, and their shrouds, and their coffins. The caper

and figtree have split their monuments, and boys have broken the hazelnut with the fragments.

To see this linden was worth a journey of five hundred miles. It looked directly up the lake, in the center of its extremity, and facing the boundary mountains of the Val-Tellina.

The cypress of Soma, where the first battle was fought between Hannibal and Scipio, is probably the oldest tree upon earth, with one exception, and in my opinion the object most worth seeing in Italy, unless it be the statue at the base of which fell Cesar.

Lest, signor Marchese, you should remain in doubt, what other tree may perhaps be older than the cypress of Soma, I shall referr you to Pietro della Valle, a lively, sensible, and veracious traveler, and credulous only where credulity is necessary to salvation. He mentions "a place marked out by an old terebinthus, having three trunks growing from one root: and St. Jerom writes that it was there in his time, and that it was holden in great veneration by the people round." I do not believe the terebinthus to be so durable as the cypress; not being so slow in growth, and the branches being more easily broken by the wind, whence the rain

is admitted, cracks and crevices are made, and insects lodge in them and enlarge them. The antiquity of this terebinthus must have been very considerable in the time of St. Jerom, to have been distinguished so remarkably from other trees, and to have been even then in veneration, and its appearance could have been but little changed in the twelve centuries, between his visit and that of Pietro della Valle. I do not believe that in England we have any oak or yew (for cypresses do not flourish with us) older than about a thousand years. There is one of the latter on my estate at Lanthony, near the abbey, which the oldest of the neighbours tell me, they never heard of being different in its condition. Its decay must have begun two or three centuries.

PALLAVICINI.

I would gladly see that Lake, which detained you three whole years amongst a people so rude and barbarous.

LANDOR.

Barbarous can I think the people among which are two families of my friends? It was in Como I received the brave descendents of the Jovii, and the calm philosophical Sironi. I must love that city too for other recollections. Thither came to

visit me the learned and modest Bekker, and it was there I shed my last tear when I said farewell to Southey.

PALLAVICINI.

Our towns, to continue the subject on which we began, are in much better taste than our villas.

LANDOR.

They are superb, and appear the more so after the wretched streets of France. In that country almost every thing animated is noisy, and almost every thing inanimate is mis-shapen. All seems reversed: the inhabitants of the north are darker than those of the south: indeed the women of Calais are much browner than any I have seen in Italy: the children, and the very dogs and frogs, are more clamorous than ours; the cocks are shriller. On the staircases, as here, the more decent do that which the less decent do at the corner of the streets; but at worst we are shocked by no contrast, the very language seeming to be constructed upon stinks; while in Italy we cannot walk ten paces without observing the union of magnificence and filth, of gorgeous finery and squalid meanness; and the expressions of vice and slavery are uttered in the accents of angels. The churches are fairly divided between piety and prostitution, leaving the entrance and a few broken

chairs to beggary and vermin. Here always is something of misapplied paint and importunate gilding. A couple of pepper-boxes are mounted on St. Peter's; a dozen of mass-boxes range the Colosseo; the Pantheon is the tomb of a fidler.

Enter the gardens, and approach the vases: do you perceive the rarity, the beauty, the fragrance of the flowers? In one is a bush of box, in another a knot of tansey: Neptune stands in a parterre of cabbages, and from the shell of a Triton sprout three turnips . . . to be sold.

PALLAVICINI.

Our first object in the garden is profit. The neighbourhood of Genoa produces a large quantity of lemons, and many families are supported by renting, at about thirty crowns, an acre or less of lemon ground.

LANDOR.

I mentioned the fact at Pisa, with some doubt and hesitation, and there I learned from Don Luigi Serviti and Signor Georgio Salvioni, both gentlemen of Massa di Carrara, the following extraordinary fertility of a lemon tree. A wager was laid in the year 1812 by Signor Antonio Georgieri of Massa with Marchese Calani of Spezia, that, at Croscello, half a mile from the former place, there was one which would mature

that year fourteen thousand lemons. It exceeded the quantity. In Spain I was informed that a certain tree in favorable seasons might ripen nearly three thousand; in Sicily the same. The fruit however of the tree at Croscello is small, of little juice, and bad quality. I presume it to be a wilding. This and the celebrated vine at Hampton-Court are the two most extraordinary fruit-bearing trees on record; they have quintupled the most prolific of their species.

We Englishmen talk of *planting* a garden; the modern Italians and ancient Romans talk of *building* one *. Ours, the most beautiful in the universe, are not exempt from absurdities: but in the shadiness of the English garden, it is the love of retirement that triumphs over taste, and over a full sense and experience of the inconveniences.

Inhabiting a moist and chilly climate, we draw our woods almost into our dining-rooms: you, inhabiting a sultry one, condemn your innocent children to the ordeal of a red-hot gravel. The shallow well, called *pescina*, in the middle of every garden, contains just enough water to drown them, which happens frequently, and to supply a generation of gnats for the *villeggianti;* while the up-

* Cui Cneius noster locum ubi hortos *ædificaret* daret.
Cic. ad Atticum. Ep. xvi. l. ix.

right leaden spout, curveting its liquid filament into it, is merely a representation of what the gardener himself, if called upon, could do better and more abundantly. We again may be ridiculed in our turn: our serpentine ditches are fog-beds.

You should cover your reservoirs.. an old hat or wig would do it... and we should invite our Naiads to dance along the green a good half-mile from our windows.

The English are more zealous of introducing new fruits, shrubs, and plants, than other nations: you Italians are less so than any civilized people. Better fruit is eaten in Scotland than in the most fertile and most cultivated parts of your peninsula. As for flowers, there is a greater variety in the worst of your fields than in the best of your gardens: as for shrubs, I have never seen a lilac, a laburnum, a mezereon, in any of them, and yet they flourish before almost every cottage in our poorest villages. I now come among the more ordinary fruits. The currant, the gooseberry, and the raspberry, the most wholesome of fruits, and not the least delicious, were domesticated among you by the French, in some few places: they begin to degenerate already. I have eaten good apples, pears, and cherries, in this country; the two latter much better than ours; the other kinds appeared

to me unfit for the table, not to say uneatable: and, as your gentlemen send the best to market, whether the produce of their own gardens or presents, I have probably tasted the most highly flavoured. Altho the sister of Bonaparte introduced peaches, nectarines, and apricots, from France, and planted them at Marli near Lucca, no person cares about taking grafts from them.

We wonder in England, when we hear it related by travelers, that the peaches in Italy are left under the trees for the swine; but when we ourselves come into the country, our wonder is rather, that the swine do not leave them for animals less nice.

I have now, signor marchese, performed the conditions you imposed on me, to the extent of my observation; hastily, I confess it, and preoccupied by the interest you excited.

PALLAVICINI.

Across the road, exactly four paces from your antechamber, were the quarters of your general: exactly forty-eight from his window, out of which he was looking, did this peasant woman lie groaning with labour, when several soldiers entered her bedroom, and carried off the articles most necessary in her condition. Her husband ran under the apartment of the general, which faced the

wife's, entreating his compassion. He was driven away.

LANDOR.

Was nothing done?

PALLAVICINI.

A few threats were added.

LANDOR.

Impossible, impossible!

PALLAVICINI.

Since, sir, we are in the regions of impossibility, do look again, I entreat you, at the palace just before us: and I am greatly mistaken if I cannot fix your attention upon something of higher import than a span of turf.

LANDOR.

It is among the most magnificent and, what is better, the most elegant, that I have hitherto seen in Italy; for I have not yet visited the Venetian territory, and know merely from engravings the admirable architecture of Palladio. Whose is it?

PALLAVICINI.

It belongs to the family of Cambiagi, to which our republic, while it pleased God to preserve it, owed many signal benefits, as doges and as senators. In the latter capacity, a private man from amongst them constructed at his own expense the

most commodious of our roads, and indeed the first deserving the name that had ever been formed in Liguria, whether by moderns or ancients.

LANDOR.

How grand is that flight of steps upon which the children are playing! These are my vases, marchese, these are my images, these are decorations for architecture, this is ornamental gardening, and suitible to all countries and climates. Take care, blessed creatures, a fall from such a highth!...

PALLAVICINI.

Over those steps, amidst the screams and embraces of those children, with her arms tied behind her, imploring help, pity, mercy, was dragged by the hair the marchesa Cambiagi.

LANDOR.

For what offence?

PALLAVICINI.

Because her husband had mastered his prejudices, and resigned his privileges.

LANDOR.

Signor marchese, the English general, whatever may be the public opinion of his talents, his principles, and his conduct, could never have known and permitted it.

PALLAVICINI.

Perhaps not: I can only declare that his windows were filled with military men, if uniforms make them, and that he was amongst them: this I saw. Your Houses of Parliament, M. Landor, for their own honour, for the honour of the service and of the nation, should have animadverted on such an outrage: he should answer for it: he should suffer for it.

LANDOR.

These two fingers have more power, marchese, than those two houses. A pen! he shall live for it. What, with their animadversions, can they do like this?

CONVERSATION X.

GENERAL KLEBER

AND

SOME FRENCH OFFICERS.

GENERAL KLEBER

AND

SOME FRENCH OFFICERS.

An English officer was sitting with his back against the base of the Great Pyramid. He sometimes looked toward those of elder date and ruder materials before him, sometimes was absorbed in thought, and sometimes was observed to write in a pocket-book with great rapidity.

"If he were not writing," said a French naturalist to a young ensign, "I should imagine him to have lost his eyesight by the ophthalmia. He does not see us: level your rifle: we cannot find a greater curiosity."

The Arts prevailed: the officer slided with extended arms from his restingplace: the blood, running from his breast, was audible as a swarm of insects in the sand. No other sound was heard. Powder had exploded; life had passed away; not a vestige remained of either.

"Let us examine his papers," said the naturalist.

"Pardon me, sir," answered the ensign; "my first enquiry on such occasions is *what's o'clock?* and afterwards I pursue my mineralogical researches."

At these words he drew forth the dead man's watch, and stuck it into his sash, while with the other hand he snatched out a purse, containing some zecchins: every part of the dress was examined, and not quite fruitlesly.

"See! a locket with a miniature of a young woman!" Such it was... a modest and lovely countenance.

"Ha! ha!" said the ensign; "a few touches, a very few touches, I can give them, and Adèle will take this for me. Two inches higher, and the ball had split it... what a thoughtless man he was! There is gold in it too: it weighs heavy. Pest! an old woman at the back! grey as a cat."

It was the officer's mother, in her old age, as he had left her. There was something of sweet piety, not unsaddened by presage, in the countenance. He severed it with his knife, and threw it into the bosom of her son. Two foren letters and two pages in pencil were the contents of the

pocket-book. Two locks of hair had fallen out: one rested on his eyelashes, for the air was motionless, the other was drawn to the earth by his blood.

The papers were taken to General Kleber by the naturalist and his associate, with a correct recital of the whole occurrence, excepting the appendages of watch, zecchins, and locket.

"Young man," said Kleber, gravely, "is this a subject of merriment to you? Who knows whether you or I may not be deprived of life as suddenly and unexpectedly? He was not your enemy: perhaps he was writing to a mother or sister. God help them! these suffer most from war. The heart of the far-distant is the scene of its most cruel devastations. Leave the papers: you may go: call the interpreter."

He entered.

"Read this letter."

My adored Henry . . .

"Give it me," cried the general; he blew a strong fire from his pipe and consumed it.

"Read the other."

My kind-hearted and beloved son . . .

"Stop: read the last line only."

The interpreter answered, "It contains merely the name and address."

" I asked no questions: read them, and write them down legibly."

He took the paper, tore off the margin, and placed the line in his snuffbox.

" Give me that paper in pencil, with a mark of sealingwax on it."

He snatched it, shook some snuff upon it, and shrunk back. It was no sealingwax: it was a drop of blood; one from the heart; one only; dry, but seeming fresh.

" Read."

Yes, my dear mother, the greatest name that exists among mortals is that of Sydney. He who now bears it in the front of battle, could not succour me: I had advanced too far: I am however no prisoner. Take courage, my too fond mother: I am among the Arabs, who detest the French: they liberated me. They report, I know not upon what authority, that Bonaparte has deserted his army, and escaped from Egypt.

" Stop instantly," cried Kleber, rising. " Gentlemen," added he to his staffofficers, " my duty obliges me to hear this unbecoming language on your late commander in chief: retire you a few moments . . . Continue."

He hates every enemy according to his courage and his virtues: he abominates what he cannot debase, at home or abroad.

"Oh!" whispered Kleber to himself, "he knows the man so well."

The first then are Nelson and Sir Sydney Smith. Their friends could expect no mercy at his hands. If the report be anything better than an Arabian tale, I will surrender myself to his successor as prisoner of war, and perhaps may be soon exchanged. How will this little leaf reach you? God knows how and when!

"Is there nothing else to examine?"

"One more leaf."

"Read it."

Written in England on the battle of Aboukir.

Land of all marvels in all ages past,
Egypt, I hail thee from a far-off shore;
I hail thee, doomed to rise again at last,
And flourish, as in early youth, once more.

How long hast thou lain desolate! how long
The voice of gladness in thy halls hath ceast!
Mute, e'en as Memnon's lyre, the poet's song,
And half-suppress the chaunt of cloistered priest.

Even he, loquacious as a vernal bird,
Love in thy plains and in thy groves is dumb,
Nor on thy thousand Nilefed streams is heard
The reed that whispers happier days to come.

O'er cities shadowing some dread name divine
  Palace and fane return the hyena's cry,
And hoofless camels in long single line
  Stalk slow, with foreheads level to the sky.

No errant outcast of a lawless isle,
  Mocker of heaven and earth, with vows and prayers,
Comes thy confiding offspring to beguile,
  And rivet to his wrist the chain he wears.

Britain speaks now.. her thunder thou hast heard..
  Conquerer in every land, in every sea;
Valour and Truth proclame the almighty word,
  And all thou ever hast been, thou shalt be.

"Defender and passionate lover of thy country," cried Kleber, "thou art less unfortunate than thy auguries. Enthusiastic Englishman, to which of thy conquests have ever been imparted the benefits of thy laws? Thy governors have not even communicated their language to their vassals. Nelson and Sydney are illustrious names: the vilest have often been preferred to them, and severely have they been punished for the importunity of their valour. We Frenchmen have undergone much: but throughout the whole territory of France, throughout the range of all her new dominions, not a single man of abilities has been neglected.

Remember this, ye who triumph in our excesses. Ye who dread our example, speak plainly; is not this among the examples ye are the least inclined to follow?

" Call my staff and a file of soldiers.

" Gentlemen, he who lies under the pyramid, seems to have possessed a vacant mind and full heart, qualities unfit for a spy. Indeed he was not one. He was the friend and companion of that Sydney Smith who did all the mischief at Toulon, when Hood and Elliot fled from the city, and who lately, you must well remember, broke some of our pipes before Acre . . . a ceremony which gave us to understand, without the formalities of diplomacy, that the Grand-Signor declined the honour of our company to take our coffee with him at Constantinople."

Then turning to the file of soldiers, " A body lies under the Great Pyramid: go, bury it six feet deep. If there is any man among you capable of writing a good epitaph, and such as the brave owe to the brave, he shall have my authority to carve it with his knife upon the Great Pyramid, and his name may be brought back to me."

" Allow me the honour," said a lieutenant; " I fly to obey."

" Perhaps," replied the commander in chief,

" it may not be amiss to know the character, the adventures, or at least the name" . . .

" No matter, no matter, my general."

" Take them however," said Kleber, holding a copy, " and all try your wits."

" General," said Menou smiling, " you never gave a command more certain to be executed . . . What a blockhead was that king, whoever he was, who built so enormous a monument for a wandering Englishman!"

CONVERSATION XI.

BISHOP BURNET

AND

HUMPHREY HARDCASTLE.

BISHOP BURNET

AND

HUMPHREY HARDCASTLE.

HARDCASTLE.

I AM curious, my lord Bishop, to know somewhat about the flight and escape of my namesake and great uncle, Sir Humphrey Hardcastle, who was a free-spoken man, witty, choleric, and hospitable, and who cannot have been altogether an alien from the researches of your lordship into the history of the two late reigns.

BURNET.

Why, Mr. Hardcastle, I do well remember the story of that knight, albeit his manners and morals were such as did entertain me little in his favour. For he hunted and drank and fornicated, and (some do averr) swore, which however, mark me, I do not deliver from my own knowledge, nor

from any written and grave document. I the more wonder at him, as he had lived among the Roundheads, as they were contemptuously called, and the minister of his parish was Ezechiel Stedman, a puritan of no ill repute. Howbeit he was ensnared by his worldlymindedness, and fell into evil courses. The Lord, who permitted him a long while to wallow in this mire, caught him by the heel, so to say, as he was coming out, and threw him into great peril in another way. For although he had mended his life, and had espoused your great aunt Margaret Pouncey, whose mother was a Touchet, two staid women, yet did he truly in a boozing-bout, such as some country-gentlemen I could mention do hold after dinner, say of the Duke, *James, a murrain on him, is a papist.*

Now among the others of his servants was one Will Taunton, a sallow shining-faced knave, sweaty with impudence. I do remember to have seen the said Taunton in the pillory, for some prominent part he had enacted under the doctor Titus Oates; and a countrywench, as I suppose her to have been from her apparel and speech, said unto me, plucking my sleeve, *Look, parson, Will's forehead is like a rank mushroom in a rainy morning; and yet, I warrant you, they shew it forsooth as the cleanest and honestest part about him.*

To continue: Will went straitway, and communicated the words of his master to Nicolas Shottery, the Duke's valet. Nick gave unto him a shilling, having first spatten thereon, as he, according to his superstition, said, for luck. The Duke ordered to be counted out unto him eight shillings more, together with a rosary, the which, as he was afraid of wearing it (for he had not lost all grace), he sold at Richmond for two groats. He was missed in the family, and his roguery was scented. On which, nothing was foolisher, improperer, or unreasonabler, than the desperate push and strain Charles made, put upon it by his brother James, to catch your uncle Hum Hardcastle. Hum had his eye upon him, slipped the noose, and was over into the Low-Countries.

Abraham Cowley, one of your Pindarique Lyrists, a great stickler for the measures of the first Charles, was posted after him. But he played the said Abraham a scurvy trick, seizing him by his fine flowing curls, on which he prided himself mightily, like another Absalom; cuffing him, and, some do say, kicking him, in such dishonest wise as I care not to mention, to his, the said Abraham's, great incommodity and confusion. It is agreed on all hands that he handled him very roughly, sending him back to his master with a

flea in his ear, who gave him but cold comfort, and told him it would be an ill compliment to ask him to be seated.

Phil White, added he, *may serve you, Cowley. You need not look back, man, nor spread your fingers like a figleaf on the place. Phil does not, like Dan Holroyd of Harwich, carry a bottle of peppered brine in his pocket: he is a clever, apposite, upright little prig: I have often had him under my eye close enough, and I promise he may safely be trusted on the blind side of you.*

Then, after these aggravating and childish words, turning to the Duke, as Abraham was leaving the presence, he is reported to have said, I hope untruly... *But, damn it, brother! the jest would have been highthened if we could have hanged the knave.* Meaning not indeed his messager, but the abovecited Hum Hardcastle. And on James shaking his head, sighing, and muttering his doubt of the King's sincerity, and his vexation at so bitter a disappointment, *Oddsfish! Jim*, said his Majesty, *the motion was Hum's own: I gave him no jog, upon my credit. His own choler did it, a rogue! and he would not have waited to be invested with the* order, *if I had pressed him ever so civilly. I will oblige you another time in any thing, but we can hang only those we can get at.*

It would appear that there was a sore and rankling grudge between them, of long standing, and that there had been divers flings and flouts backwards and forwards, on this side the water, on the score of their mistress Poesy, whose favours to them both, if a man may judge from the upshot, left no such a mighty matter for heartburnings and ill blood.

This reception had such a stress and stir upon the bile and spirits of doctor Spratt's friend (for such he was, even while writing about his mistresses), that he wooed his Pegasus another way, and rid gentlier. It fairly untuned him for Chloes and fantastical things of all sorts, set him upon anotherguess scent, gave him ever afterwards a soberer and staider demeanour, and turned his mind to contentment.

HARDCASTLE.

The pleasure I have taken in the narration of your Lordship is for the greater part independent of what concerns my family. We have only a few songs of our unkle; and these too would have been lost, if the old coachman had not taught them to his granson, still in my service. They are such as I forbid him to sing in our house, but connive at him doing it when he is in others, particularly at

the inns, where they always obtain me the best wine and most gladsome attendence. In fact, I have ever found that, when my horses came out of a stable where he had been singing, they neighed the louder, and trotted the faster, and made a proudler display of their oats.

BURNET.

I remember one of them, from its being more reasonable than the invocations of a lover usually are. For either they talk of tears, which they ought to be ashamed of, as men and christians; or of death, when the doctor has told them no such thing; or they run wild among the worst imps and devils of the gentiles; for in truth they are no better, whatever forms they assumed, Nymphs or Graces or what not.

HARDCASTLE.

Pray, my lord bishop, if there is no impropriety in asking such a favour, might I request a copy of those verses?

BURNET.

Truly, sir, I keep none of such a girl's-eye sampler. I will attempt to recollect the words, which, I own it, pleased me by their manfulness, as shewing that your unkle Hum, tho a loosish man, and slippery in foul proclivities, was stout and resolute

with the sluts in his wiser moments, calling them what they ought to be called, at the first word.

Listen, mad girl! for giving ear
May save the eyes hard work:
Tender is he who holds you dear,
But proud as pope or Turk.

Now Hum hated paganism and iniquity; and nothing could stir him from his church, tho he attended it but seldom. He proceeds thus:

Some have been seen, whom people thought
Much prettier girls than you..

Observe, he will be reasonable, and bring the creature to her senses if he can!

Setting a lover's tears at nought,
Like any other dew;

And some too have been heard to swear,
While with wet lids they stood,
No man alive was worth a tear..
They never wept.. nor would.

Resolute! aye! False creatures! he sounded them, even the deepest. There is something

about these wantons black as hell, and they cannot help shewing it.

HARDCASTLE.

I thank your Lordship, as much for your reflexions as for my unkle's poetry.

BURNET.

I wish he had left behind him the experience he must have paid dear for, that it might serve to admonish the sprigs and sparks (as they are called) of our unhappy times, and purify the pestilence they are breathing. Formerly, we know from Holy Writ, the devils ran out of men into swine, and pushed down in those fit bodies to the sea: it now appears that they were still snifting and hankering after their old quarters; and we find them rushing again into men, only the stronger and hungrier, the ungovernabler and uncleanlier, for so much salt-water bathing.

HARDCASTLE.

I am afraid, my lord bishop, you have tóo much reason for this severe remark. My unkle I knew was somewhat of a libertine, but I never had heard before that he was such a poet, and could hardly have imagined that he approached near enough to Mr. Cowley for jealousy or competition.

BURNET.

Indeed they who discoursed on such matters were of the same opinion, excepting some few, who see nothing before them and every thing behind. These declared that Hum would overtop Abraham, if he could only drink rather less, think rather more, and feel rather rightlier: that he had great spunk and spirit, and that not a fan was left upon a lap when any one sang his airs. Lucretius tells us that there is a plant on Helicon, so pestiferous that it kills by the odour of its very flowers. It appears that these flowers are now collected by our young women for their sweet-pots, and that the plant itself is naturalized among us, and blossoming in every parlour-window. Poets, like ministers of state, have their parties, and it is difficult to get at truth, upon questions not capable of demonstration nor founded on matter of fact. To take any trouble about them is an unwise thing: it is like mounting a wall covered with broken glass: you cut your fingers before you reach the top, and you only discover at last that it is, within a span or two, of equal highth on both sides. To sit as an arbitrator between two contending poets, I should consider just as foolish, as to take the same position and office between two gamecocks, if it were at the same time as wicked.

I say as wicked; for I am firmly of opinion that those things are the foolishest which are the most immoral. The greatest of stakes, mundanely speaking, is the stake of reputation: hence he who hazards the most of it against a viler object, is the most irrational and insane. I do not understand rightly, in what the greatness of your poets, and such like, may be certified to rest. Who would have imagined that the youth who was carried to his long home the other day, I mean my Lord Rochester's reputed child, Mr. George Nelly, was for several seasons a great poet? Yet I remember the time when he was so famous an one, that he ran after Mr. Milton up Snow-hill, as the old gentleman was leaning on his daughter's arm from the Poultry, and, treading down the heel of his shoe, called him a rogue and a liar, while another poet sprang out from a grocer's shop, clapping his hands, and crying *Bravely done! by Belzebub! the young cock spurs the blind buzzard gallantly!* On some neighbour representing to Mr. George the respectable character of Mr. Milton, and the probability that at some future time he might be considered as among our geniuses, and such as would reflect a certain portion of credit on his ward, and asking him withal why he appeared to him a rogue and liar, he replied: *I have proofs*

known to few: I possess a sort of drama by him, entitled Comus, which was composed for the entertainment of Lord Pembroke, who held an appointment under the king, and this very John has since changed sides, and written in defence of the Commonwealth.

Mr. George began with satirizing his father's friends, and confounding the better part of them with all the hirelings and nuisances of the age, with all the scavengers of lust and all the link-boys of literature; with Newgate solicitors, the patrons of adulterers and forgers, who, in the long vacation, turn a penny by puffing a ballad, and are promised a shilling in silver, for their own benefit, on crying down a religious tract. He soon became reconciled to the latter, and they raised him upon their shoulders above the heads of the wittiest and the wisest. This served a whole winter. Afterwards, whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy, an elegy by a seduction, an heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorse. On the remark of a learned man, that irregularity is no indication of genius, he began to lose ground rapidly, when on a sudden he cried out at the Haymarket, *there is no God.* It was then surmised more generally and more gravely that there

was something in him, and he stood upon his legs almost to the last. *Say what you will*, once whispered a friend of mine, *there are things in him strong as poison, and original as sin.* Doubts however were entertained by some, on more mature reflexion, whether he earned all his reputation by his aphorism: for soon afterwards he declared at the Cockpit, that he had purchased a large assortment of cutlasses and pistols, and that, as he was practising the use of them from morning to night, it would be imprudent in persons who were without them, either to laugh or to boggle at the Dutch vocabulary with which he had enriched our language. In fact, he had invented new rhymes in profusion, by such words as *trackschuyt*, *Wageninghen*, *Skiermonikoog*, *Bergen-op-Zoom*, and whatever is appertaining to the marketplaces of fish, flesh, fowl, flowers, and legumes, not to omitt the dockyards and barracks and ginshops, with various kinds of essences and drugs.

Now, Mr. Hardcastle, I would not censure this: the idea is novel, and does no harm: but why should a man push his neck into a halter to sustain a catch or glee?

Having had some concern in bringing his reputed father to a sense of penitence for his offences,

I waited on the youth likewise, in a former illness, not without hope of leading him ultimately to a better way of thinking. I had hesitated too long: I found him far advanced in his convalescence. My arguments are not worth repeating. He replied thus. *I change my mistresses as Tom Southern his shirt, from economy. I cannot afford to keep few; and I am determined not to be forgotten till I am vastly richer. But I assure you, doctor Burnet, for your comfort, that if you imagine I am led astray by lasciviousness, as you call it, and lust, you are quite as much mistaken as if you called a book of arithmetic a bawdy book. I calculate on every kiss I give, modest or immodest, on lip or paper. I ask myself one question only; what will it bring me?* On my marveling and raising up my hands, *You churchmen,* he added, with a laugh, *are too hot in all your quarters for the calm and steddy contemplation of this high mystery.*

He spake thus loosely, Mr. Hardcastle, and I confess, I was disconcerted and took my leave of him. If I gave him any offence at all, it could only be when he said, *I should be sorry to die before I have written my life,* and I replied, *Rather say before you have mended it.*

But, doctor, continued he, *the work I propose*

may bring me a hundred pounds. Whereunto I rejoined, *That which I, young gentleman, suggest in preference, will be worth much more to you.*

At last he is removed from among the living: let us hope the best; to wit, that the mercies which have begun with man's forgetfulness, will be crowned with God's forgiveness*.

* Little did I imagine that the extraordinary man, the worst parts of whose character are represented here, should indeed have been carried to the tomb so immaturely. If, before the dialogue was printed, he had performed those services to Greece which will render his name illustrious to eternity, those by which he merited such funereal honours as, in the parsimony of praise, knowing its value in republics, she hardly would have decreed to the most deserving of her heroes, if, I repeat it, he had performed those services, the performance of which I envy him from my soul, and as much as any other does the gifts of heaven he threw away so carelessly, never would I, from whatever provocation, have written a syllable against him. I had avoided him; I had slighted him; he knew it: he did not love me; he could not. While he spoke or wrote against me, I said nothing in print or conversation: the taciturnity of pride gave way to other feelings, when my friends, men so much better, and (let the sincerity of the expression be questioned by those who are unacquainted with us) so much dearer, so much oftener in my thoughts, were assailed by him too intemperately.

Let any man who has been unfair or injurious to me, shew

HARDCASTLE.

I perceive, my lord bishop, that writers of perishable fame may leave behind them something worth collecting. Represented to us by historians like your lordship, we survey a light character as a film in agate, and a noxious one as a toad in marble.

that he has been so to me only, and I offer him my hand at once, with more than mere forgiveness.

Alas! my writings are not upon slate: no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years and in the storm and tempest, can efface the written. Let me be called what I may.. I confess it, I am more inconsistent than he was. I do not talk of weeping or bewailing or lamenting, for I hate false words, and seek with care, difficulty, and moroseness, those that fit the thing.. why then should I dissemble that, if I have shed no tears, they are at this moment in my eyes! O that I could have clasped his hand before he died! only to make him more enamoured of his own virtues, and to keep him with them always!

A word to those who talk of inconsistency. There is as much of it in him who stands while another moves, as in him who moves while another stands. To condemn what is evil, and to commend what is good, is consistent: to retract an error, to soften an asperity, to speak all the good we can, after worse ill than we would, is that and more. If I must understand the word inconsistency as many do, I wish I may be inconsistent with all my enemies. I will take especial care that my inconsistency never makes me a worse man or a richer.

BURNET.

How near together, Mr. Hardcastle, are things which appear to us the most remote and opposite! how near is death to life, and vanity to glory! How deceived are we, if our expressions are any proofs of it, in what we might deem the very matters most subject to our senses! the haze above our heads we call the heavens, and the thinnest of the air the firmament.

CONVERSATION XII.

PETER LEOPOLD

AND

THE PRESIDENT DU PATY.

PETER LEOPOLD

AND

THE PRESIDENT DU PATY.

Among the few Frenchmen who, within the last fifty years, have reflected much honour of any kind on their country, a distinguished rank is holden by the President Du Paty. His letters on Italy contain the most acute observations, and his interview with Leopold forms no inconsiderable portion of their interest. Pleased with the justness of his remarks and the pointedness of his expressions, and perhaps hoping to derive some advantage to the new Code, from his deep study and long practise of jurisprudence, Leopold invited him to return the next day.

At the hour appointed, the Granduke was leaning with his elbow on the chimneypiece, that he might neither rise at the entrance of the President nor receive him in the manner of a sovran. The

commencement of all conversation is trifling, even among the greatest men: this expression, whenever I use it, means men of the greatest genius and worth. The usual courtesies then having been exchanged, Leopold thus addressed his illustrious visitant.

LEOPOLD.

I know, M. Du Paty, that your compliments, rich and abundant as they are, cannot stifle nor supersede your sincerity; and that if I seriously ask your opinion on the defects of my Code, you will answer me just as seriously.

The President bowed, and, observing that Leopold had paused, replied.

PRESIDENT.

Sir, I cannot bear in mind all the articles of your Code; and unless I could do so, my observations, if not erroneous, must be imperfect. On these subjects we may not talk vaguely and fancifully, as on subjects of literature. Where man is to decide on man, where the happiness or wretchedness of one hangs on the lips of another, where a breath may extinguish a family or blight a generation, every thing should be tried particle by particle... To have abolished capital punishments is a proof, in certain circumstances, no less of wisdom than of humanity: but I would suggest to your

consideration, whether you have provided sufficiently for the protection of property and of honour. Your prisons are empty; but are you sure that the number of criminals is less? Or are you of opinion that it is better to see them at large than in custody?

LEOPOLD.

Here are few assassinations, and no highway robberies.

PRESIDENT.

I will explain the reason. In other countries the prostitutes are a distinct class: in Tuscany not. Mela says, after Theophrastus, *apud Tyrrhenos conjugia communia.* Where there are no jealousies there will be few assassinations. Supposing a case of tyranny, the Tuscans will wriggle under it rather than writhe; and if even they should writhe, yet they will never stand erect. They will committ no assassinations from the other motive to them, that is, for the purpose of robbing: and robbery on the highway they will not committ, having such facilities for committing safer and more compendious. Every man may plunder the vineyard of another at small hazard of prosecution; nor is there a single one in all Tuscany that is not plundered repeatedly every autumn, unless the owner pass his nights in it during

the maturity of the grapes. If he prosecutes, he suffers a heavier punishment than the prosecuted: he loses several days of labour, and receives no indemnity; nor indeed is there any security against a similar injury the succeding year. Many robberies require impossible proofs. There are others the crime of which is extenuated by what ought to be an aggravation, because they are also breaches of trust.

I know that your Highness has enacted clement laws in order to humanize the people, and that violence might never be added to rapine. But laws should be formed according to the character of the nation that is to receive them. The Italians were always more addicted to robbery and revenge than any other European people; crimes equally proceding from idleness and effeminacy.

LEOPOLD.

On what authority do you found your assertion, M. Du Paty, that the Italians were always so addicted to theft?

PRESIDENT.

I will not urge as a proof of it the increasing severity of the ancient laws, which would only demonstrate their imperfection: but I will insist on the documents of the Latin writers *de re rusticâ*, who give particular directions on the breed of

house-dogs for the safeguard of the farms, however far removed be the subject from cattle and cultivation. Nothing similar has entered into the scheme of any modern author on agriculture. Added to which, there is hardly a Latin writer, whether in prose or poetry, whatever be his subject, who does not say something about thieves; so familiar was the idea. The word itself extended, in more than one direction, beyond the character it first designated: Plautus calls a soldier *latro*, Horace calls a servant *fur*. The Romans, who far excelled us in the greater part of their institutions, were much inferior in what by way of excellence we call the *police*. Hence, in early times, an opening to theft, among a people less influenced than any other by continence and honour. In many whole provinces of England, France, and Holland, and throughout all the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, the countryman may sleep in perfect security with his doors wide open: in Italy, not a single village, not a single house, from Como to Reggio. The windows of every dwelling in Florence, even of your own palace, are barricaded by grates of iron; in other words, every dwelling, your own among the rest, holds forth in the censor's face a libel against the government.

The fault is partly in the laws, and partly in the magistrature; for there is no nation so easily coerced by fear, as this. I recommend not cruelty. Those laws are cruel which are illusory, dilatory, or costly, to such as appeal to their protection; not those which award a stated and known severity of punishment for proven offences. The latter are no more so than a precipice or a penknife: I may leap down the one, I may cut my throat with the other; I may do neither. I pay taxes for the security of my person, my property, and my character: every farthing I pay beyond for law, if I can demonstrate the equity of my cause, is an injustice.

Sistus Quintus is the only sovran who appears to have acted uniformly according to the national character. Happy would it have been for his country, had he united to omniscience another attribute of the Godhead, immortality.

LEOPOLD.

In that case, M. Du Paty, I should not have had the pleasure of your conversation here. I see however that cruel laws do not necessarily make a people cruel. The Romans (I would rather call them the inhabitants of Rome) were less so under Sistus Quintus than before or since; and your

neighbours the English are, and have always been, the most humane of men, under penal laws the most iniquitous and atrocious.

PRESIDENT.

The laws of England have been the subject of eulogy to many learned and sagacious men. I have read them repeatedly and pondered them attentively. I find them often dilatory, often uncertain, often contradictory, often cruel, often ruinous. Whenever they find a man down they keep him so, and the more pertinaciously the more earnestly he appeals to them. Like tilers, in mending one hole, they always make another. There is no country in which they move with such velocity where life is at stake, or, where property is to be defended, so slowly. I have hardly the courage to state these facts, and want it totally to hazard a reflexion on them. Can we wonder that, upon a Bench under so rotten an effigy of Justice, sate a Scrogges, a Jefferies, a Finch, a Page!

The Roman institutions were incomparably better, when the most respectable and the most elevated characters of the republic walked up and down the forum, ready to receive the complaints and to redress the grievances of their fellow citizens.

Law is become, in England, not only the most expensive, but the most rapacious and the most dishonest of trades: and the most licentious of strolling comedians are those, who, under the title of barristers, accompany the English judges in their circuits. In *cross-questioning*, as they term it, or examination of deponents against their client, they bear no respect whatever to honour or genius or any kind of worth; and the accuser who has been robbed, defrauded, or otherwise injured, has a graver and more intolerable wrong impending over him, not only than what he has already suffered, but even than what the criminal himself, in most instances, has to fear: so shameless is the effrontery, so unrestricted the invective, of barristers. What is peculiar in our times to the English, is, that these alone are the qualities for which the leaders of their Opposition are chosen; and from the Opposition (when the dunghill is well heated) ministers and secretaries, heads and tails, dart across the road before you.

LEOPOLD.

I have observed that these worthies begin their course by rowing with their backs against the stream, leaving it to be inferred what feats they can perform when a fare is offered them to go with

it. With them we have nothing to do: let us descend again to the lower courts, in which the slowness of reparation is the thing most complained of. Justice in England is perhaps the slower in her movements from a higher sense of decorum.

PRESIDENT.

One would imagine that, in this long minuet of hers, she might take better care not to sweep against and upset the refreshments. Who would suppose that laws, instituted to humanize and civilize mankind, and on the operation of which the eyes of the most acute and most virtuous men, particularly in free countries, are constantly intent, should retain a degree of ferocity much greater than, on any occasion, they are called upon to correct? and should retain it where the nation has less of it than any other, and where hardly any trace of it is to be discovered out of its tribunals? Yet England, and within these twenty years, saw the worst of tortures inflicted on a criminal, not for his crime, but for his constancy; not for the violation of his country's laws, but for his inviolable observance of nature's; not for yielding to the solicitations of poverty or to the seductions of vice, but for disregarding pain, torture, death itself, that he might not injure his family. Until the year 1772 a man, convicted of felony or petty

treason, incurred what is barbarously and foolishly called *corruption of blood*, followed by confiscation of goods, if, after or before his sentence, he acknowledged himself guilty: but if, hoping to save from ruin a family he had already brought to shame, he refused to answer the questions of the court, and neither denied nor confessed his guilt, then he was led back to his dungeon, a little bread and water was given to him, he was cast upon his back, and he perished by the slow operation of an iron weight upon his breast. Blackstone, in his encomium on the English laws, which he entitles a commentary on the Constitution, is unable to deny or to dissemble this fact *. Nevertheless the procedures and administration of justice are better in England than in France: in England it would be an infamy for any person to solicit or even to visit a judge on any case, criminal or civil: in France it would be thought a folly and an affront not to do it, and the omission of it would be the loss of the suit †. We Frenchmen are the most delicate people in the world on points of honour, and the least delicate on points of justice.

* See Chap. 25.

† The same thing, which ceased under Napoleon, is now common throughout the Continent, and certainly no less in Tuscany than elsewhere.

LEOPOLD.

In other words the most on imaginary things, the least on real. A man's vanity tells him what is honour, a man's conscience what is justice: the one is very importunate in all times and places: the other but touches the sleeve when men are alone, and, if they do not mind it, leaves them. Point of honour you may well call it; for such precisely is the space it occupies.

Nothing is at once so surprising and proves to me so clearly the moral excellence of the English above all other nations, as their juries. That twelve men should be unanimous, in order to punish an offender, and that neither fear nor corruption should have influenced an individual in the many hundred thousands who have been jurymen, is a miracle in morals and jurisprudence. No other nation could prudently or safely adopt this English institution: no Italian legislator could modify it in any way; nor indeed does it appear to me advisable, in the most perfect state to which human nature can be brought, that more than nine in twelve should decide on guilt or innocence. For take the better informed half of the world, put the names into an urn, draw them out at hazard, and by twelves, and you will surely find at least three in that number weak, obstinate, or dishonest.

PRESIDENT.

Some of the English laws are most strange, and equally strange are the expressions. I may be punished *for bringing a man into contempt:* as if any one could be brought into it without stirring a step on his own legs toward it. Aristides may have been laughed at, Phocion may have been reviled; but the judge who should have said that either had been brought into contempt, would have been covered with it himself by every citizen of Athens. The English are somewhat less quick in the apprehension of absurdity. This expression is not merely an absurdity, but a most pernicious one. The doctrine was inculcated by M. Murray, a Scotchman by birth, but an English judge, and the opinion of judges in that country, when once acted upon, passes into law. The national character, if I am not greatly mistaken, will within half a century feel the sad effect of this decision. Nothing in the world is such a safeguard of liberty and of virtue, as the maxim *Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat*, or such a loss and misfortune as its abolition. I would punish most severely every thing false against character, and permitt every thing true, as being the fairest chastisement of faults and follies, the mildest and surest and most expeditious. On the contrary, an English judge would

punish in a fellow-citizen what he applauds in a Roman historian.

LEOPOLD.

No tyrant in modern ages, no, nor any in ancient, however barbarous and brutal, hath enacted such unjust and cruel laws as the parliament of England. Where will you point out to me one equal in atrocity, to that which authorizes the renegade son of a catholic to dispossess his father of his estate? *Honour thy father and mother* is erazed from the commandments of the *reformed* church by act of parliament. The renegade may be elected to sit in this parliament, and his qualification is founded on the very property, from which he has ejected his own father. If you translated the English statutes into the language of Madagascar or Mozambic, and redd them to the prince of either country, what would be his first impression?

PRESIDENT.

He would ask with what instrument the English sharpened their teeth; whether they coloured them black, red, purple, or yellow; and would order his subjects to besmear their bodies with some acrid juice or gum, whenever a British vessel was observed upon the coast.

It may indeed be doubted whether the laws of

England have not been gradually deteriorating for above seven hundred years: that is, whether they have not been accumulating more anomalies, more uncertainties, more delays, more costs, more contradictions, more cruelties *.

LEOPOLD.

In England a peasant is slaughtered for the slaughter of another's sheep against his consent: a servant for stealing his master's spoon or wig: a little vagabond, starving at christmas, snatches a rag from a hedge, and is recommended to the hangman for correction ... Are these laws better than mine?

PRESIDENT.

No, sir; they are worse in themselves; yet your Highness would do well to make the exchange, throwing back to the English, the boy, rag, spoon, and wig. They would suit your people better, and might fairly be laid aside when it had outgrown them: but I suspect they would be serviceable many years. Punish all crimes and you will punish few; remitt a single one and you create a thousand.

* Shute Barrington, in the year 1776, published *Observations on the Statutes, with a Proposition for new-modelling them.* Bacon, while chancellor, did the same, and as ineffectually.

LEOPOLD.

In England great crimes escape thro the intensity of law; in Italy small ones thro its relaxation. Which is the worse?

PRESIDENT.

I dare to answer that the latter is: because great crimes do not run into smaller, but smaller into greater; and because, if there were not this reason, multitude turns the scale against magnitude.

I must here observe to you that the privilege of pardon in a prince, is the most flagrant of usurpations. It belongs for the greater part to the person injured; but not entirely: the magistrate, who takes cognizance of the particulars, should also give his assent in the name of the community, but not in consequence of any private petition or any subsequent representation.

I perceive with pleasure in your Code that fines occurr but seldom.

LEOPOLD.

Pray, M. Du Paty, give me your reasons. If they are the same as mine they strengthen them; if they are different, they are more.

PRESIDENT.

Fines and halters, the minions of English jurists, are the most summary and the least summary of

chastisements, and by far the worst. A great fine does no harm whatever to a man of great fortune: it is a bribe to the laws, and ought as much to be prohibited as a bribe to the judge. It ruins, not the poorer man, but the poorer man's children: it deprives him of what he perhaps may do without, but what they cannot, without an injury to society. If his education was defective, which the offence goes a great way toward proving, theirs must be more defective still, because the means of educating them are taken away or lessened. In some countries heavier fines are imposed for injuries or affronts committed against the superiors of the offender, slighter for those against the inferiors: this, if indeed they are ever equitable in such cases, ought to be reversed: for the inferior is the weaker in calumny and injustice, as in other things. We cannot strike so hard from below as from above. The rich and powerful man does not lose even so much as a salute by it, while the artisan or tradesman loses in one instance a customer, in another ten or twenty, in another his livelihood.

LEOPOLD.

In reply to the former of your remarks, I know not what else to say than that all punishments must in some degree touch the innocent; and that

the family of every criminal is a loser in estimation, and consequently in property and prosperity, by his punishment, however just.

PRESIDENT.

According to your laws, two witnesses of bad character are worth more than one of good. But your Highness will excuse me from entering further on the Code itself, or from touching any single provision on it, since no conversation could do it rightly and satisfactorily; and indeed I am persuaded that your Highness would rather hear what I think of the spirit and its effects, than of any particular point or position.

The first duty of a legislator is to proportion penalties; the second is to isolate them as much as possible, and to embank the waters of bitterness. I would therefore, both for the sake of compensation to the unoffending and to guard against offences, place the children of criminals in schools or workhouses, appointed for that purpose, and forbid them to keep the paternal name, which, for more than one reason, should be the first thing forfeited. A workhouse should contain a school, not of writing or reading, but of industry. If you wish to make the bulk of men wiser, do not put books into their hands, which they will either throw away from indifference, or must drop from

necessity, but give them employment suitable to their abilities, and let them be occupied in what will repay them the most certainly and the best. Their thoughts will thus be directed to one main point, and you will produce good artisans and good citizens: this is the wisdom for every day in the week; and what is higher than this will never be impeded by it, and will often rise out of it.

LEOPOLD.

I will consider your advice: I say it as legislator, not as prince: for in our language, you know, when we promise to consider we purpose to neglect. Here I may venture to say, that, suitable to my character, my laws are wary and circumspect.

PRESIDENT.

I am afraid that, in the practise of jurisprudence, circumspection more than rarely means dilatoriness. Delay of justice is injustice. When offences are defined and punishments are apportioned, no circumspection is necessary. According to the practise in Tuscany, if I complain of a robbery, a young commissary of police examines me, and writes my deposition, without reading it over to me that I may acknowledge or challenge its correctness. After several weeks another young commissary examines me again; at the same interval a third; and if my relation varies a tittle from

what is found written by either, no chance remains of recovering the loss or of punishing the offender. These young men are paid no better than postilions; and it seldom happens that one of the three is not corrupted by the offender. Travelers cannot delay their journey: their valets know it: hence hardly one in twenty but finds himself robbed in this city. Witnesses are required where witnesses cannot be expected: for which reason treachery is the constant companion of violence, and all manliness of character is excluded.

I brought with me a letter of introduction to a gentleman here whom I found unwell, and his medical friend by the side of him in some choler. As the invalid laughed, I took the liberty of asking the cause of his good spirits. *The doctor will tell you his story*, said he. It was in the beginning of January, and his coachman had been robbed of his great coat: he found all again, detected the thief, and brought him before the magistrate. His deposition was written down carefully. *According to custom, I and my coachman shall be called a second time in about forty days, a third in about forty more; that, if there is any discrepancy in our evidence, which may arise from collusion, and most probably from forgetfulness in some minute circumstances, the rogue may enjoy the benefit of the*

laws, and be acquitted. In the meantime I must purchase my coachman another great coat; for justice here keeps nobody warm but the lawyers; and the stolen one will be eaten by the tineole, *as is inevitable in cloth at the close of February, if not carefully aired and beaten.*

It is remarkable, that in a single week two other cases have occurred in point. A young man in the theatre applauded an actress; one sitting near him called him a blockhead for his admiration. He replied. The severer critic, to prove his superior judgement, made a different use of his hands, applying them to the face and frill of the applauder, who stood motionless as the prompter himself, and on the following day applied to the police. It being proved that he returned no blow, the Aristarchus was condemned to a month's imprisonment.

A few days before or afterward (I forget which) a young forener, a painter by profession, who had refused a favour to another, was waylaid by him in the street at dusk, and a blow was aimed at his head from behind with a club, which, if he had not at the moment heard the feet of his assassin, must have killed him, as it required from its massiveness the use of both hands, and the assassin was a remarkably strong man. The forener turned

and avoided it, immediately aiming a blow at his adversary. The facts were proved: and this blow, necessary for self-preservation, was alleged as the reason why the crime was punished by one day's confinement. Yet the offender, it cannot be doubted, had premeditated an assassination, and had carried it as far into effect as he could. For his attempt he was almost unpunished; and if he had succeded in it he would not have been punished at all; for the witnesses were brought together only by the contest. Had there been no contest there would have been no witnesses: it being the *etiquette* here in Tuscany not to interfere in another man's affairs without strong solicitation. Now the dead can neither ask favours, nor, what is equally necessary, requite them. Cowardice then is a merit, courage a bar to justice. What can be expected from a people, the least confident of all in personal strength and honour, and according to some the most insincere and fraudulent, when such dispositions are countenanced by such institutions?

LEOPOLD.

I need not remark, M. Du Paty, that institutions are with difficulty laid aside.

PRESIDENT.

Yet your Highness has abolished a very ancient

one, that of monachism, I forbear to say totally, but surely almost so, and that without detriment or danger. Now the forest is thinned, we discover its boundaries and can make our way through.

LEOPOLD.

The business is done then to your satisfaction.

PRESIDENT.

Not altogether so. In my journey from Pisa to Florence, I inquired what was allotted to each ejected monk, and was informed that it amounted to somewhat less than what each galleyslave could earn in prison; facilities and materials of which earning are supplied to him by government, but are supplied in no measure to the ejected monk.

LEOPOLD.

The fellows are idlers* and rogues: none of

* There is less agreement on the character of reformers than of others, and Peter Leopold was a reformer. It is reasonable to suppose that he should have defended his conduct in some such manner as is represented in this dialogue. His enemies accuse him of avarice; and support their opinion by insisting on the inadequate education and slender maintenance of his natural children. Irony may say of Leopold, what Flattery said of Cosmo III, that he was *pater pauperum*. The hospitals however were abundantly supplied and carefully attended. After his decease, the lands belonging to them have been granted on perpetual leases, their income much diminished, and their superintendence much neglected. At Pisa

them understand and few of them believe what they teach. I am not more imperious and arbi-

the poorest and most afflicted are so reluctant to enter the hospital, that the number of patients is reduced to *half* of what it was in the time of Leopold, and the quantity of accommodations and of comforts to less. At Florence the public is *permitted* to send subsidies of food twice in the week, and instances have occurred of patients who have suffered severely by the sudden effect of a nutricious meal.

The less contemptible of princes love money for the sake of power, the more contemptible love power for the sake of money. Avarice is condemned in them from a sentiment of avarice. Other faults injurious in a greater degree to the public morality are overlooked or forgiven. The principal one of Peter Leopold was his employment of spies and informers. Curiosity and lust were the motives ; not cruelty nor suspicion. He and Lord Cowper divided all the beauty of Tuscany in such a manner as that neither should be jealous. In every family throughout Florence, high or low, one of the domestics or one of the children communicated to the agents of the Granduke a detail of its most minute affairs. No harm perhaps was perceived by them in these communications, which never led to punishment and seldom to inconvenience ; but in fact they did greater mischief to the national character than the best institutions could remedy or compensate. Hence venality, bad-faith, suspicion, cowardice ; hence the prostration of private and the extinction of social virtue. Chetani, a thief-taker, a man equally of scandalous life and of coarse manners, walked into all the societies of Florence unmolested : age lost its dignity, youth its vivacity, in his presence : all bowed be-

trary with the monks, than the monks have been with princes. I have removed their cells, they have removed our palaces. The church of Saint Isidore in Seville was opposite the royal palace. Sanchia, the king's daughter, was praying at a window which faced the shrine of the saint, when

fore the grand informer. This creature has formed the manners of two generations, and perhaps the national character for centuries to come. Leopold was in such security by his means, that, on his departure from Tuscany, he left behind him not a soldier in Florence. He saw growing up a generation of pygmies; and he saw them surrounded by cranes, with clipt wings and broken beaks.

As we frequently find in the progeny of spotted animals, that some are all-white, others all-black, so appears it in the family of Leopold, that one has inherited all the brighter parts, the others all the darker of his character. In removing my hand from the portraiture, I wish I could dismiss the most excellent prince of his age, with merely a charge of unwise curiosity, of unworthy suspicion, or of too vague an indulgence in sensuality. I wish he had always observed in himself the justice he enforced in others. The Counts del Benino for services rendered to Florence inherited certain valuable privileges: Leopold annulled them. Del Benino petitioned that he might appeal to the courts of justice. Leopold frankly and willingly assented. The judges fancied they should flatter him by displaying in their decision a luminous proof of his equity, and gave a sentence in favour of the plaintiff. Leopold disregarded it, and refused Del Benino any satisfaction for his loss.

he appeared to the family, and commanded that the situation of the palace should be changed, as it was unsafe to have a woman so near his ashes*.

St. Andreas and St. Podius, two Florentine archbishops, whose images stand opposite in the cathedral, would serve a sculptor or painter as models for the proudest and bitterest of the fallen angels. I have never seen such countenances among the living: for in the gallies we see roguery out of power, and hopeless of authority and respect: those of the Florentines in general express good nature and self-satisfaction.

The body is dangerous from a show of enthusiasm, of all pests upon earth the most contagious. Those who believe nothing make others believe most; as the best actors on our theatres are those who retain the most perfect command over their feelings, voice, and countenance. Our spiritual Mamelukery is as ambitious of power and riches as if it had children to inherit them, and the money that falls into their hands lies dead, the land indifferently cultivated. I shall fumigate my old hives, one after another, not minding the buz from within.

* Luca Tudensis Hist. Mirac. Sti Isidori, c. xxxv. Bollandus.

PRESIDENT.

The worship of St. Nicholas, I imagine, would be more easy to abolish than that of any other Saint.

LEOPOLD.

Why so?

PRESIDENT.

Because he, making the sign of the cross, brought to life a brace of roasted partridges; as I saw yesterday, painted and written in the cloister of Santo Spirito. Surely he can have few favourers in the church, who so abuses the holy weapon: if he had lifted it up and brought down a brace out of a covey, instead of subducting them from the platter, when it had pleased God to put them upon it, he might have expected more fervency of adoration.

LEOPOLD.

I shall next abolish the greater part of the festivals: for every saint in the calendar has made ten thousand beggars and ten thousand thieves, not counting monks.

PRESIDENT.

In my humble opinion, your Imperial Highness would have begun better with the abolition of *fasts*, as they are improperly called. If your people were mariners, if you possessed a fishery, then indeed there would be a politic and adequate reason for maintaining the institution; but as the Ita-

lians make less use of their coast than any people in the world, as amongst them only the Venetians have a fishery, there is no sufficient cause or plea for it. That God is better pleased with a sharp bone than a blunt one, I never can concede. This I know; fasts, if real, enervate men and render them unfit not only for the duties of war, but for the occupations of peace. If salt fish, the only kind within the reach of the common people, be called a fast, the most important effect it produces is, that it makes them drink more wine than they would otherwise do, and deteriorates their blood.

The Athenians did not keep fasts; but their policy led them to eat salted the grillo, the grasshopper, and the locust, which diminished the number of these creatures, and which, at all events, it was better to eat than to be eaten by.

LEOPOLD.

A flight of locusts then in Attica was like a flight of quails to the bishop of Caprea.

Frequently, when I have been vehement against abuses, but silent on my intentions, the clergy has told me that abuses form no part of their religion: they now tremble at what they call innovation, not knowing or dissembling that, in a pure religion, there can be no other innovations than abuses.

They talk to me about the religion of our forefathers, conveyed to us in all its purity from the earliest ages. I am afraid, M. Du Paty, the pear was thumbed at the stalk when it was just ripe, and it rotted almost the next day.

PRESIDENT.

The priesthood in all religions sings the same anthem. First, the abuses are stoutly defended; but when the ground is no longer tenable, then these abuses form no part of the holy faith. If however they are always found in its company, you may as well say that the cat's skin is not the cat: the creature will make horrible cries if you attempt to strip it off, and perhaps will die of the operation. If you see a man the greater part of his life in bad company, and growing worse at an age when he ought to act more wisely and more decently, you avoid him, whether his father and mother were honest people or not.

You have done much toward the destruction of a system, where fraud has been incessantly building upon fraud for fifteen hundred years. The most dexterous attack ever made against the worship of the Virgin, the principal worship among catholics, which opens so many sidechapels to pilfering and imposture, is that of Cervantes. When we once go beyond the unity of God, who

can say where we shall stop? the human mind is then propelled into infinite space, and catches at any thing, from a want of rest.

LEOPOLD.

I do not remember in what part Cervantes speaks of this.

PRESIDENT.

Throughout Don Quixote. Dulcinea was the peerless, the immaculate, and death was denounced against all, who hesitated to admitt the assertion of her perfections. Surely your Highness never could have imagined, that Cervantes was such a Knight-errant as to attack Knight-errantry, a folly that had ceased more than a century, if indeed it was any folly at all; and the idea that he ridiculed the poems and romances founded on it, is not less improbable: for they contained all the literature of the nation, excepting the garniture of chapterhouses, theology, and pervaded, as with a thread of gold, the beautiful histories of this illustrious people. He delighted the idlers of romance by the jokes he scattered amongst them on the false taste of his predecessors and of his rivals; and he delighted his own heart by this solitary archery; well knowing what amusement those who came another day, would find in picking up his arrows and discovering the bull's-eye

hits. Charles V was the knight of La Mancha, devoting his labours and vigils, his wars and treaties, to the chimerical idea of making all minds, like watches, turn their indexes, by a simultaneous movement, to one point. Sancho Panza was the symbol of the people, possessing sound sense in all other matters, but ready to follow the most extravagant visionary in this, and combining implicit belief in it with the grossest sensuality. For, religion, when it is hot enough to produce enthusiasm, burns up and kills every seed entrusted to its bosom. Allusions are made to the catholic church by more than one person ; but the author had the good taste, not to say the prudence, to avoid a continuity of allegory in so long a work, and to make it yield to character. In the same manner Petronius alludes to Nero, sometimes in a philosopher, sometimes in a poet, and often in himself; so that the emperor stood in a room pannelled with mirrors, and turned nowhere without seeing his own features.

LEOPOLD.

Your exposition of the subject is quite novel to me, and your observation on it just. I care nothing about the worship of mapletrees and marble, or the inscriptions under them, or the coronets above: but I am resolved, if not to forbid, at

least to discountenance the canonization of more saints in Tuscany. Many noble families have been ruined by counting a saint amongst them; almost as many as have been enriched by counting a pope. The process costs fifty thousand crowns. When it happens that a poorer man or woman is made the object of adoration, then indeed it is attended with somewhat lighter expense, because the confraternity that solicits it never does so, unless it has some powerful patron at Rome, nor unless the speculation is sure enough to be lucrative.

PRESIDENT.

It appears to me, sir, that even in a religion resting on peculation and fattening on vice, with violence on the right hand and falsehood on the left, giving every thing to the slothful and taking every thing from the industrious, no evil is worse than the necessity of periodical confession to priests: an evil which, I am afraid, all your power cannot remove nor all your wisdom remedy. It does more than impoverish noble families: it divests them of their respectability. What young woman who has once overcome her sense of shame, so as to expose before a stranger of another sex the first secrets of the heart, and the disclosing germs of the passions, can retain any delicacy of character? Modesty, by lifting up her veil, is changed in all her

features; and when she turns her first step aside, is gone for ever. Nothing could be invented so efficacious as confession, to encrease and perpetuate the dominion of the catholic priesthood, and nothing so efficacious to accumulate and secure its wealth, as the doctrine of purgatory. Confession is good if it be made to the person injured. Ingenuousness, manliness, a resolution to give satisfaction for a wrong, and a pledge to abstain from it in future, are then, and then only, its seasonable and salutary fruits. Confession is not only not good, but positively and greatly bad, if it be made to a priest, as it always is in the catholic church; because it transfers the authority of pardoning from him who can to him who cannot. He whose haystack is burnt may pardon the burner of it; but he who only hears of its being burnt is in no such situation. A father may forgive the corrupter of his daughter; can a priest?

LEOPOLD.

He says so.

PRESIDENT.

He lies then. God has given him no such authority, nor can he shew that God has enabled him to pardon any sin whatever on confession made to *him*: but he knows that neither confession to God nor (what is better) to the injured party,

will give him power and domination, by placing the hearts of men, and with their hearts their stomachs and purses (two other vital parts) within his reach and under his key.

LEOPOLD.

The priest inherits, he tells you, his prerogative from the apostols.

PRESIDENT.

He may as well pretend to the gift of tongues: peculiar powers and attributes were conferred on the apostols, which never were intended for perpetuity. The catholic church selects from these whatever can aggrandize it, by whatever means and application.

LEOPOLD.

Come, now for purgatory: after this last sentence you want it.

PRESIDENT.

Whether there be or be not such a place or thing as purgatory, I think it useless to inquire, since no inquiry will lead me to proof and certainty. Truths, untruths, ambiguities, serve mother church most filially. Purgatory has one gateway upon earth; under which gateway is a till to receive the small coin and great coin of all comers.

Will you leave your father and mother in the flames for ages, when masses can release them?

O sinner, you may expect the same hardness of heart in your own children; and your offences will be the heavier by the addition of this inhumanity, practised by you toward your unhappy parents, taught by you to your unhappier progeny. The penitent in terror begs and implores the tender priest to say them. What priest will do it unpaid? Catholics cure sins as old women cure sties in the eye, by rubbing them with gold.

LEOPOLD.

M. du Paty, you do not believe then our religion to be of divine origin.

PRESIDENT.

Every good action, every good thought, every thing good, is of divine origin: but I see nothing of the divine in manifest fraud, swarming with its insects, and reeking in its exposure: I see nothing of it in the political invention of priestly institutions, nor in that base metal which soders the church to the state. As christians we can take only the word of Christ for our rule. Neither the dreams of the convent nor the revels of the vatican are adapted to the present day. We know more things and better than priests and monks have taught us; nor do we esteem those people the more in a tiara than in a cowl, in scarlet and embroidery than in black and white. When vio-

lence and ignorance had usurped the Roman empire and the Greek, reasonably did the few wise men unite against the many unwise, until an equal and a safer share of power was granted them. Religion opened her august asylum: Peace, Virtue, Learning took refuge there, and sate quietly at the side of Bigotry and Imposture. Diversity of opinion did at last spring up; but the great body of the thinking, at least in this country, found the comfort of holding together. Thus by degrees the church grew on a level with the state, and (what remote posterity will hardly credit) overtopped it. Times have changed greatly since: kings equal monks, and nations equal kings. Whether it ought to be so, I dare not ask: certainly it appeared a monsterous thing so lately as two centuries ago. The first attempts were made by Venice and Holland: one defeated the most powerful king in Europe, and the other broke the league of nearly all.

Compare the women of Saxony and England with those of Italy and, I say it very reluctantly, of France. What a difference! In Florence indeed you rarely see an Englishwoman of character: they are chiefly those who are little respected at home; arrogant, presumptuous, suspicious, credulous, and speaking one of another

more maliciously than untruly. But English-women in their character as in their cloaths contract a great deal of dirt by traveling. Of this there are many causes: such as the filthiness of our continental inns, so shocking to decency, and to nothing of which kind are they accustomed in their own country; the immodest language they hear from all classes, and nearly from all individuals, a thing utterly unknown amongst them at home; the conversations on topics to which not even the most vulgar wretch in England ever alludes in presence of a female; and above all, their intercourse with others of their countrywomen who, from a long residence abroad, have been deeply initiated in foren manners. These lead the fashion: these teach them to talk aloud in their chapels, where they have any, and to feed greedily on the blushes of the more innocent, who at first enter decorously and piously, but who soon do the same toward others, that they may not be thought awkward and ill-bred.

Your Highness is perhaps acquainted with what occurred this morning. The young woman I understand was among the beauties of a little fishing-town in the west of England: an ensign fell in love with her, and married her. She soon observed that it was unfashionable in Italy to live

without her *cavaliere serviente:* she engaged one: he went away: she took another. In these matters the number two multiplies rapidly: they followed not singly nor by intervals, but one upon another, like eels down a floodgate after a shower. Having found access to the house of the Minister, she was visited by many, however they declamed against her, until at last a gallant for some private injury has whipt her twice in the streets this very day. It is hoped she will have interest enough to stop enquiry, and will have received no other harm than a few such circuitous lines as designate the latitudes on a globe, and the name, partly derived from her native place, and partly from her recent misfortune, of *La Nereide Frustata*... the whipt Nereid. Nicknames and whippings, when they are once laid on, no one has discovered how to take off.

LEOPOLD.

What the English ladies may be in their interior I do not pretend to know: but when I compare their manners and address with those of my Florentines, or indeed with those of any other nation, it is far beyond my prerogative to grant them the precedency. Ours are accused of levity at church: they go thither, it is objected, to make love. Be it so. I never saw a Florentine girl or

woman, who did not come out in better humour than she entered, nor an English who did not come out in worse. The heart may surely be as impure from gall as from love; and if we must err on either side, let it rather be toward the kind affections than toward the unkind. The Florentine opens her heart, gives it, and resumes it, as easily as her fan: the Englishwoman abroad keeps hers locked up, as a store-room for the reputations she has torne, or intends to tear, in pieces. She may be indeed a good mother; but if she takes alarm or umbrage at every foot that approaches her, I would rather have such a good mother in cub or kennel, than in my closet, or at my table.

PRESIDENT.

The Englishwoman is domestic: she of highest rank superintends the village-school, hears the children their lesson, examines their cleanliness, observes their dress, enquires into their health, remarks their conduct, presages their propensities, is amused at their games, and is interested in their adventures. She visits the sick, she converses with the aged, she comforts the afflicted, and she carries her sons and daughters with her, to acquire the practice of their duties. Those in England are all diffidence; those in Italy all defiance.

Awkward beyond all other women upon earth, they happily are the most so when they are copying what is bad.

If we desire to know with certainty what religion is best, let us examine in what country are the best fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, wives: we shall there also find the best citizens, and of course the best christians.

LEOPOLD.

The catholic has one advantage over all others, in the fixedness of its dogmas.

PRESIDENT.

These have been interpreted according to the convenience of the hierarchy. One pope, on more than one occasion, has even flatly contradicted another; and not only has this been done where the contradicted pope has been declared an *antipope* (exquisite solution!) but where antipapacy was never dreamt of. Benedict XIV, in the formulary called the *act of faith* prefixed to the elementary works of education, and even to the alphabet, makes the children say "they believe that the Son of God will bestow on the good the *eternal* glory of paradise, and on the wicked the *eternal* pains of hell." Children, who have not a penny in their pockets, may believe it; but old men and women, who carry a warm purse in fob

or sack, entertain another belief. They are assured that the wicked are not liable to eternal pains, if they leave enough behind them for masses; and the church teaches them this belief. In vain will any one tell me, that masses will relieve from purgatory only, and not from hell. Where is the instance that a wealthy man has been told on his death-bed that the church cannot save his soul by masses, or that he has not been confirmed in his credulity that it can? Pay handsomely for masses, and Hell is out of the question. When you are there indeed you are too late; make haste!

LEOPOLD.

Popery, with all her abuses, hath had her converts, and even from among the reformed, and men neither vicious nor ignorant: explane me this.

PRESIDENT.

Reasons and reason are different things. In all religions there have been believers who reflected with equal intensity. Those you mention, serious and melancholy triflers, attach much importance to things of little. After attempting to penetrate and pass the crowd of fathers (as they are called) and saints and martyrs, and knowing that before them lies a vast extent of perplexity and confusion, they stop, exhausted and spiritless, cast

back a look of anguish over the ground they have plodded through, hesitate, close their eyes, and sink upon the bosom of infallibility. As if the Almighty had ever invested with his attributes a senseless and vicious priest, studious of nothing but the usurpation of power and the aggrandizement of family, a creature stained, as the greater part hath been, with murder and incest and other enormities, at which Nature is confounded and Piety in consternation.

If the popes are the servants of God, it must be confessed that God has been very unlucky in the choice of his household. So many, and so atrocious, thieves, liars, and murderers, are not to be found in any other trade; much less would you look for them at the head of it.

LEOPOLD.

Take care they do not catch you, and treat you as Julius II was about to treat Ariosto.

PRESIDENT.

I will not touch his Galatea under his eye. Little am I disposed to be the hero of an eclogue, and less than any of a piscatory one.

LEOPOLD.

The best among them permitt for money what they and all their statutes condemn. Prohibitions are merely a preparation for indulgences: sins are

wealth, masses save souls, virtues are insufficient. I have under my windows here in Florence, no fewer than three uncles married to their nieces, by express permission from the *Holiness of our Lord*... the title always given to him in our gazettes. A little more wealth, with hardly any more impudence, and we (unless I check it) may see brother and sister, father and child, united by the sacrament of matrimony.

PRESIDENT.

Let me return to my monks, who, whatever may be the abuses of their institutions, have nothing to do with such abominations.

LEOPOLD.

While they are monks, no: but scatter the dragon's teeth upon a warmer mould, and up springs a body of the same troopers.

Those of Rome were desirous, not many years ago, of beatifying one of your countrymen. *Such a rarity*, said Benedetto Sant-Anna, one of its promoters, *was the brilliant device of father Nepomuceno, and should have gloriously greased our platters.*

Benedetto Sant-Anna Torbellini is the natural son of a prince whom I esteem. Neglecting his studies, he was placed in a monastery at Rome, where he was remarkable for his musical powers,

and his influence on the minds of his fair auditors. An intrigue with the adopted niece of a Cardinal, was his ruin. *It is not enough, Benedetto,* said his Eminence, *that you treat me with this ingratitude; me, who from your earliest youth have treated you with paternal kindness. We have known each other's foibles: but such an affront in my own library, under my own eyes, is unpardonable.*

In vain he protested that, guilty as he was, this aggravation of his guilt was unintentional: that for the universe he would not have wounded the feelings of his early friend and benefactor, who certainly had been towards him a great deal more than ever father was; that his Eminence at no other time could have been irritated by any levity in him; that he thought the library a sanctuary unentered by human foot; and that he and Costanza had almost blinded themselves, by dusting the cushion where...

Begone from my sight, villain; leave Rome instantly, cried the cardinal.

He obeyed, bringing me a letter; on which, knowing his state of probation, I did not hesitate to place him at the head of my young fifers, and he will shortly be leader of my band. His account of the sanctification is this.

A poor devil had been observed every day, for

twenty years, saying his prayers and beating his breast upon a bridge at Rome. It sounded like a drum from inanition, voluntary or involuntary. During the performance of these religious duties, a boy, who had gone over to the butress, on such an occasion as is usual here in Italy on those places, fell from it, and was taken up by a barge a little way off. We have receits for doing every thing, miracles not excepted. On the death of the Frenchman, who was attended in his last moments by father Nepomuceno, it was resolved to make a saint of him, as having saved by his intercession the boy who tumbled from the butress. Depositions were made upon oath that he was seen praying at the time, and that he neither called out for assistence nor exerted any other human aid. Such unequivocal proofs of piety and faith interested all the holy city in his behalf. His cloaths, after being well shaken on the bridge and sprinkled with holy water, were removed to the convent. Benedetto Sant-Anna had the charge of giving them the odour of sanctity, by sprinkling them daily with the powder of a Tonquin bean, a substance then unknown at the capital of the christian world. They were kissed inside and outside, and some of the more pious in this operation licked them furtively.

You must have observed at Rome, M. Pre-

sident, a vast number of lame beggars. No single war, in ancient or modern times, could have lamed so many as now become lame every year. Nearly all are cheats. A consultation was holden by the elder monks; and it was resolved to collect these rogues and vagabonds, and to restore the use of their limbs in the church of the monastery. Two younger members of the confraternity were commissioned to joke with some and to pay a paolo to others. At the morning appointed for the solemnity, the cloisters were filled with these creatures upon crutches, and the church, arrayed in silks of yellow and red, was admirably well attended. Every one was in full dress: the ladies with naked bosoms, the gentlemen with swords. Suddenly the cloister-door flew open, and a tremendous sound was heard from the pavement to the roof. Tatters rustled round, crutches and knees, and bosoms covered with parchment, made a noise greater than that of an attack with bayonets. Waves of mendicants, one bending over another, poured in. It was an edifying sight.

An old beggar, really lame, and not in the secret, heard by chance of the ceremony, and hopped in after the rest. Many prayers were offered up to the beggar-saint: the censer was waved frequently before his picture; motions of the hands

in various figures were made over the supplicants, and all received signal benefit. Some walked like boys; others walked indeed, but felt pain. Again crosses were made, again breasts were beaten, groans and thanksgivings were mingled, till at last pain and stiffness were unfelt by all; old sinews were knitted anew, lost bones recovered, and even the maimed and mangled left their late supports in the nave of the church as incumbrances, and perhaps as offerings, and walked firm and erect to finish their thanks in the refectory. One only remained. Father Nepomuceno who led the rear, approached him marveling, and said majestically and somewhat angrily, *Arise.* The beggar, strengthened in faith, made an effort.

Do not you find yourself better? said father Nepomuceno.

Rather better, replied the mendicant.

Rise then instantly.

He raised himself vehemently, and his crutches and knees and knuckles rattled all in unison upon the floor.

Thou man of little faith! away! exclamed father Nepomuceno. He led him into his cell, and cried furiously, *What means this?*

God knows, replied the poor good patient creature; *it is God's will.*

Have you prayed? asked the father hastily.

Thrice aday regularly since I could speak.

In church? and always to the Virgin?

Yes, replied the penitentiary.

Have you confessed?

Yes.

Have you scourged yourself for your manifold sins?

Alas! how can I scourge myself! cried the beggar with tears in his eyes, from so painful an inability... *I can only beat myself when I lie down: and besides, I can committ no offence to any one, which God forbid I should ever wish to do.*

No offence to any one! is that no offence! How! no offence do you think it to talk thus presumptuously? We are all sinners: unless we did works of charity and penitence, what, in the name of heaven, would become of us! Vile wretch! I must open your eyes; you have secret crimes unexpiated: you have brought dishonour upon him who would have been your patron, and whose manifold mercies you have just witnessed toward the more deserving.

Upon this he took down a scourge, and bade the beggar kiss it. The contrite man complied. The father unconsciously drew it through his left hand, and found that it was one adapted to his own

shoulders. He threw it down indignantly, and seized from across the back of an arm-chair a broad embroidered garter, stiff with brazen threads double-gilt, and embossed with the letters EUFROSINA: LAURA-BEATRICE: RADICOFANI, with which, and without any farther ceremonials, he scourged the lame beggar heartily, exhorted him to faith, humility, and penitence, and dismissed him weeping and praising God that his eyes were opened *.

* Saints are again the *rage*, but saints of *bon ton*. It will hardly be credited that the following is an extract from a Gazette. Firenze, giovedi 19 Decembre 1822. La religione de' *Servi di Maria* (her servants are very familiar with her) che ha avuto origine in questa capitale, ci ha dato in quest' anno il contento di vedere due de' suoi figli, nostri Toscani, *sollevati all' onore degli altari*, cioè il B. Ubaldo Adimari, nobile Fiorentino di cui ne furono già fatte le festi nella basilica della SS. Annunziata di questa città, ne' tre giorni della scorsa pasqua, cioè 7, 8 e 9 Aprile, e nella chiesa di monte Senario il di 16 nello scorso maggio, in cui ricorreva la solennita dell' Ascenzion del Signore, e il B. Bonaventura Bonaccorsi, nobile Pistojese, del quale oltre le solennissime feste celebrate in Orvieto, *dove passò alla gloria e si conserva il di lui sacro corpo*, ne' giorni 11. 12. e 13 dello scorso ottobre, il di 14 del corrente, giorno della sua *preziosa morte*, ne fù con decente sacra pompa solennizata la memoria nella predetta basilica della SS. Annunziata. *Rendiamo pertanto grazie all' Altissimo, per averci concesso in questi due Beati Comprensori due potenti avvocati al suo divin trono!*

PRESIDENT.

I am not the advocate of this order; but it contains, I know, many virtuous individuals; many have resigned all pretensions to patrimony in favour of brothers and sisters, relying on a secure possession of their hoods and cells. I may not be greatly benefited by their processions or their prayers, but surely as much by these as by the cutlass and pistol of the highwayman.

The greatest of abuses is the bequest of gold and jewels to the Virgin and Saints. Since however it would shock the piety of the people to forbid it, the only plan I can think of, is, to decree that all such gifts be confided to the municipality in trust and guardianship, and kept under lock and key; and if the Virgin or Saint do not come and take them within the year, that it be considered as a proof no such things are wanted by them, and that they freely give them to the sick and poor. No roguery of priestcraft, no stupidity of idolatry,

According then to the papists, God is ready enough to receive thanks and perfumery, from whoever offers, without the introduction of squire or chamberlain, but is somewhat slow to grant pardon without such powerful advocates as Signor Bonaventura Bonaccorsi or Signor Ubaldo Adimari, in their saintly embroidered shoes and pink satin robes of glory.

is so gross as in this practice, which I imagine my scheme will tend speedily to correct.

Marchese Riccardi had the finest reliquiary in Italy. When he was on his death-bed, the Dominicans came about him, and his confessor was firmly of opinion that his road to Paradise would be smoother if the relics were given to their church. He was persuaded of the fact: he left the Dominicans his relics. I inquired of his son the other day, whether it was not with some regret that he presented to the Dominicans so great a treasure.

Not at all, said he.

I understand the reliquiary to have been valued at eight thousand crowns, answered I.

The reliquiary, yes, replied he, *but I never heard the value of the relics.*

What then, marchese, did you only give them?

My father, said he, *would have felt a torment the more, if the reliquiary had gone out of the family. We may hope for other relics to fill it again, and just at this time there are some real ones, that will be sold reasonably.*

I asked him what he meant. He told me that a worthy friar had been despached from Rome, on a mission to Ravenna, with a present of relics to the cathedral. He was so sober a man that, whenever

he drank an extraordinary glass of wine, it confused his intellects. On his arrival at Forli he could not contain his joy nor moderate his pride on the treasure he was conveying. The box was of cypress, curiously carved, and extremely old: a brass lock was fastened upon it with pins of the same metal. The brotherhood of the convent where he lodged, looked upon it with a variety of eyes, on hearing that it contained a treasure; for he uttered not a word upon the nature of it. Some believed it was of diamonds; others of emeralds; others of rubies: all however were convinced from the lightness that the jewels were unset. There is hardly a town in Italy where the people are idler than at Forli. The lay-brothers of the convent whispered the report in every street; and among the curious who assembled at the convent-gate was an officer, a native of Ravenna, named Filiberto Quinci. He indeed was curious to see the treasure, and not without hope that he might be ordered to convoy it, and he came to say that there was an old ammunition-waggon fit for this service; not thinking that treasures could be light things, nor having heard any expression but *have you seen the treasure?* What was his surprise on beholding a box nine inches long and seven broad, with a crucifix on the top to guard

it! What was his delight at finding a friend of his early youth in the trusty friar!

Paolo Naccheri, is it you? cried he.

Filiberto! Filiberto! cried the monk. They embraced: necks and shoulders, beards and tears, met. They went away and would supp together. The friar drew forth his pocket-hankerchief, and produced a thick slice of Bologna mortadella, some cheese, seven or eight livers, with lard enough to fry them in, and some bay leaves and rosemary. There was also a piece of new goat-milk cheese, indented like Dover cliffs by his hunger on the road. This he threw back into his cowl. The lieutenant, when he saw all these provisions, blushed a little, and was resolved not to be outdone. He had observed a goose in the morning at the shop of a poulterer, the only poulterer in Forli, and who refused to sell any smaller portion than a whole leg, with which it was stipulated that half the head and half the neck and the whole foot should be weighed. A noble of the city sent his cook several times to negotiate about it; but the poulterer was inflexible, and the noble yielded. The lieutenant did what was never done there since the days of the Lombard King Aistulphus: he stewed three-parts of a goose together, and inserted the cheese, the livers, the mortadella, the bay-leaves,

the rosemary, and the lard. The monk declared that the dish was fit for the marriage of Cana in Galilee. The lieutenant said that such was his friend's courtesy; but that in his anxiety to serve him he had forgotten the figs and the anise-seed, and begged him not to spare the lemon and sugar that were beside him; if it wanted oil, the oil in the lucerna was as fresh as any. The pleasure of meeting gave activity to their digestive powers, and to the antecedent ones: exhortations, jokes, recollections, wine, religion, women, passed in turn: and now struck the *ventiquattro* *. The monk hurried toward the convent, embracing his friend at the door, and promising to return. He did indeed; and shortly.. pale, speechless, agonizing.

What is the matter, my dear Filiberto! exclamed the lieutenant.

I am undone! I am lost for ever! The casket is broken open, the relics gone!

Have you no suspicion of the thief?

None whatever.

Some person in the convent..

Sacrilege! impossible!

* 24 o'clock, one hour after sunset, when the monks should be in the convent. Almost the only question asked by the Italians, is, *sono sonate le* 24? so teeming with big events is that hour.

Leave the matter to me: I have detected and taken up many rogues.

O for Christ's sake! it would be a scandal!

Leave it, I say, to me: I will accuse no friar, I promise you. Bring me the box by day-light.

Disturbed and disorderly were the slumbers of the monk: he attributed his loss to the levity of his conversation, which he confessed to the Virgin, begging her however to remember that he had mixed it with religion. Among other thoughts in his imperfect sleep, he fancied that the relics were again in the casket. He started up; walked toward it; closed the lid, turning his eyes away from it, as unworthy to behold it, and repeating in a tremulous voice *Fiat voluntas tua!* again placed it under the guardianship of the crucifix. Before the dawn of day he rose and dressed himself, if such an expression is applicable to friars, and having said a litany, together with a proper psalm, *By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept*, he wiped his eyes, covered the precious casket, and carried it to his friend, to whom he related his sufferings and his slumbers.

May I look at it, unworthy as I am? said Filiberto.

Take it, take it! behold it! answered the friar, sobbing piteously.

The lock was unforced, but the brass nails were

standing out from it; they had been removed and replaced.

Are you quite sure they have taken the relics?

Sure, sure; even the wrapper.

I must conferr with another upon these nails, said the lieutenant: *they may lead to the discovery of truth.* He had drawn one out slily.

No, no, no! cried the friar.

One is wanting, said his friend: *you yourself will be suspected of curiosity and unbelief, if this should be missed; another must be made quickly!*

Fra Paolo shuddered and assented.

Leave it to me, said Filiberto: *you must not appear in the business: the nut is out, I may be trusted with the shell.*

He took it into his bedroom, and having selected the larger bones of the goose from their two plates, and washed them in a lixiviate, and rubbed them with ashes, he enwrapped them in a cartouch-paper, deposited them in the casket, fastened all the nails, and in particular the one he had removed. He then ran into the room, and *Father! father!* cried he, *I will have nothing more to do with it: I am unworthy! I can averr and swear that a nail was wanting, and I believe in my conscience that several were loose.*

The father answered not. He took the casket

in his hand, looked at it, raised his eyes to heaven, and swooned. The lieutenant rubbed his temples with vinegar and gunpowder, scratched his gums with a flint, and poured some brandy down his throat, muttering in a low gruff voice what he never would have done but for a friend, *Ave Maria! presto!* The friar's senses returned, but it was long before he could find a channel for the effusion of his piety. At last he repeated three times, as the most proper on the occasion, the words in which the Lord was praised for having glorified his handmaiden. *Sinner as I am*, exclamed he, *I dare neither doubt nor believe that the miracle is complete in all its parts.* He closed his eyes; the flesh crept upon his bones; he lifted up the casket in his two hands above his head, and chaunted in a tremulous voice *Fiat voluntas tua.*

The lieutenant said that he doubted, from the lightness of the box, whether a single bone was restored. *Bones are not heavy, it is true;* added he.. *but a young girl's bones have a good deal of marrow in them.*

None whatever, answered the holy man: *they were as dry as a palm-branch* on the anniversary*

* These palms are really olive-twigs, placed over the crucifix by the bed-side, and renewed on Palm-Sunday.

.. and very small; for she was the youngest of the eleven thousand.

One miracle is as good as another, said the lieutenant .. *two trusses of hay from the same stack smell and weigh alike. Let us hope however that the pretty saint has protected her bones and vindicated her virginity.*

Again Fra Paolo chaunted *Fiat voluntas tua.* Indignant as he was at the robbery, he returned no more to the convent, and resolved to say nothing of his charge again, until he reached Ravenna. There it was received with the ringing of bells, and the display of tapestry and bed-coverlets from the windows, and the arraying of all the pillars of all the churches in the richest silks, and of all the saints in spangled shoes and powdered perrukes. The clergy, the military, the various fraternities, marched before and after it into the cathedral. Four knights supported it, eight marquisses assisting them, and his Excellency the Governor, adorned with all his orders, holding over it the umbrella. Cannon was fired as it entered the portal, and again as it ascended the steps of the high altar: for nothing of jubilee is done here, nor, I believe, in the rest of Europe, without the instruments of violence and slaughter: and many a belly felt the butt-end of a musket, for yearning

too affectionately after the youngest of the eleven thousand, in the nave of the duomo. The crowd was immense. Happy the youth who was next to his beloved on that day, for he was near indeed, and she wanted protection upon all sides. If she reproved him for any thing, the Ambrosian hymn, echoing thro the vault, intercepted it.

The bones had been verified upon the oath of surgeons and physicians, denominated on such occasions the *expert*, in presence of the archbishop, the canonics, and the protonotary. It was ascertained that the *os pubis* had been fractured, by the same violence as was offered by the executioner to the daughter of Sejanus? a farther proof of martyrdom; it being remembered by one of the canonics, that, according to the Roman laws, virgins must undergo this indignity before the last punishment. The condition of the bones was admirable. She must have been very young, poor child! If such another *os pubis* could be found among her sisterhood, it would be decorous and reverential to compose a pair of spectacles with them for the *Holiness of our Lord.* Several old priests declared that they saw much the better, on merely looking thro the mysterious curvature in its present state; and a wart of long standing was removed from the nose of one by it, after forty days, as was evident

to all Ravenna. The inauguration of the relics took place on the twenty-ninth of July: on the thirtieth of September the lieutenant Filiberto Quinci was mortally wounded from behind the wall of a vineyard, by an assassin, whose brother he had disarmed, and was leading with his hands tied behind him toward the city-prison of Forli. He confessed to a Jesuit the fraud he had committed, who absolved him the more readily, as it was committed in its first stage against a Dominican. The pain of the wound made him exert his voice; and perhaps he cared little for secrecy, in the greater hope of expiating his offence; so that many of his friends and attendents heard the recital and divulged it. Nevertheless it was agreed and certified that a miracle had really been performed; and that, altho some of the bones had been stolen, several were yet remaining, and endued with such efficacy, as to convert the baser into the more precious, the goose's into the virgin's. It is reported that the greater part of the original are brought into Tuscany, and will be sold here: this report is the comfort of Riccardi.

LEOPOLD.

I trust however, M. Du Paty, that the laws and establishments are better in Tuscany than in the other states of Italy.

PRESIDENT.

I observed nearly the same inequalities at Como. A house of industry was established there: virtuous mothers have been led frequently out of it, heavy with child, and died from inanition in the streets, their allowance of food being only one scanty meal in the twenty-four hours; while prostitutes, thieves, assassins, poisoners, have enjoyed purer air and more comfortable accommodation in prison, and have been supplied twice in the day with more wholesome food, and each time more abundantly. In both instances a discouragement is holden forth to honesty, a premium to crime.

Sovrans know more correctly the state of other countries than of their own. We may be too near great objects to discern them justly, and the greatest of all objects to a prince is the internal state of his people.

LEOPOLD.

Your observation is just. The persons we employ have more interest in deceiving us than others have. I can trust one, Gianni*. I send none

* At my last arrival on the Continent, it retained among its ruins two great men, Kosciusko and Gianni: the one I had seen in England, the other I visited in Genoa. He was in his ninetieth year: an age to which no other minister of king or prince or republic has attained. But the evil passions never preyed on the heart of Gianni: he enjoyed good health from

abroad; so that I am rather less liable to deception than my neighbours are. As the gentlemen

good spirits, and those from their only genuine source, a clear conscience. Accustomed, as I had been, to see chattering mountebanks leap one after another upon the same stage, and play the same tricks they had exploded, first amid the applauses and afterwards amid the execration of the people, I was refreshed and comforted by the calmness and simplicity of this venerable old man. Occasionally he displayed a propensity to satire, not the broadfaced buffoonery, and washy loquacity of his nation, but the apposite and delicate wit which once sparkled in the better societies of Athens and of Paris. He has left behind him a history of his own times, which never will be published in ours. If any leading state of Europe had been governed by such a minister, how harmless would have been the French revolution *out* of France, how transitory *in*. Patient, provident, moderate, imperturbable, he knew on all occasions what kind and what intensity of resistence should be opposed to violence and tumult. I will adduce two instances.

Ricci, bishop of Pistoja and Prato, had excited the indignation of his diocesans, by an attempt, as is related in the Dialogue, to introduce the prayers in Italian, and to abolish some idle festivals and processions. The populace of Prato, headed by a Confraternity, broke forth into acts of rebellion; the bishop's palace was assaulted, his life threatened. The church-bells summoned all true believers to the banner: the broken bones of saints were exposed, and invited others to be broken. Leopold, on hearing it, shocked in his system of policy, forgot at the moment the mildness of his character, and ordered all the military at hand to march against the insurgents. Gi-

of Tuscany seldom travel further than to Sienna or to Pisa, the expense of a coffeehousekeeper,

anni was sent for: he entered the very instant this command was issued. *What disturbs your Highness?* said he mildly.

You ought to have been informed, Gianni, answered the Granduke, *that the populace of Prato has resisted my authority and insulted Ricci. My troops march in a body against these wretches.*

I have already despached a stronger force against them than your Highness has done, which by your permission must remain in the city.

On free-quarters until the madmen are quiet. But how could you collect a stronger force so instantaneously?

Instead of two regiments I despached two crosses; instead of cannon and ammunition-waggons, a nail-box, a hammer, and a clean napkin. If reinforcements are wanted, we can find a dice-box at Riccardi's, and a spunge at Rospigliosi's, on good security. At this hour however, I am persuaded that the Confraternity is walking in procession, and extolling to the skies not your humanity but your devotion. It was so.

The *maximum* or *assize* had been abolished by Gianni: lands and provisions rose in value: the people was discontented, broke into his house, drank his wine, cut his beds in pieces, and carried off the rest of his furniture. Leopold, who had succeded to the Empire, and was residing at Vienna, decreed that the utmost severity should be exercised against all who had borne any part in this sedition. It was difficult to separate the more guilty from the less; particularly as every man convicted of delinquency might hope to extenuate his offence by accusing his enemy of one more flagrant. Gianni, who could neither disobey nor deferr the mandate of the Em-

under the title of plenipotentiary, is saved me everywhere.

PRESIDENT.

Your Highness is as desirous of abolishing idle offices as others are of creating them *.

peror, engaged Commendatore Pazzi to invite some hundreds of the people to a banquet in the court-yard of his palace.

Now while the other families of those Florentines, who in ages past had served this bustling little city, were neglected for their obscurity, shunned for their profligacy, or despised for their avarice and baseness, that of Riccardi was still in esteem for its splendid hospitality, that of Pazzi for its patronage of the people. The invitation was unsuspected: they met, they feasted, they drank profusely; every man brought forward his merits; what each had done, and what each was ready to do, was openly declared and carefully recorded. On the following morning, before day-break, forty were on the road to the gallies. The people is never in such danger, as from its idol.

* Scarcely any thing is more interesting than the history of this central hive, of these honied and stinging little creatures, the Florentines. Altho they have now lost their original figure and nature, for the most part, and possess not even their own lily to alight on, yet they still hum, and shew wonderful instinct. They were not created for the gloom of Dante, but they are alive and alert in the daylight of Petrarch and Boccaccio. They live under a government not oppressive, nor troublesome, nor exacting; and in this warm security they inform you with satisfaction (for they have lost the power and the right to be indignant) that there is in Italy a little state governed by a woman, who constantly sends

LEOPOLD.

I am not afraid of losing my place from a want of party friends, and have no very poor relations to support. Among the residents in Florence, I speak in confidence, M. President, I remember none of even ordinary talents, or, according to what I could judge or could learn from report, of the slightest political or literary reputation. Not long ago a young person was sent hither in that capacity, who had more dogs than books, and more mistresses than ideas. He rode hard, drank hard, and fiddled hard, and admitted to his society, as such people

after the *opera* to the innkeepers of her city, and demands a portion of what has been spent amongst them within the day by strangers. If many carriages have stopped at their doors, in passing through the place, the same visit is made, the same tax imposed. She has forbidden the extraction of pictures, offering to purchase them at the value: she has taken several to herself, and has never paid for them. Is it not as proper for the Saints of the Holy Alliance to exercise the duties of high police in such instances, as against the public, where great nations, and such as were never subject to them, rise unanimously and demand the reform of government? England maintains a minister at the court of this woman, whose revenues are little more than his appointments, and whose political influence is weaker than that of any one who keeps a secondrate ginshop in Wapping. What reed or rush, in its rottenest plight, but serves for the spawn of our aristocracy to stick on!

usually do, the vilest and most abandoned of both sexes. At Milan, his course was arrested by a deficiency of means: he had already drawn on his bankers here for sums, beyond such even as the prodigality of his government had enabled him to deposit in their hands. With this heavy debt upon him, he drew on them again from Milan, at one single time, for four thousand crowns: the draft was dishonoured, with a protestation that their concerns were inadequate to such frequent and vast demands. He replied with a vehemence of language, such as most tribunals would have severely punished in a private character, and such as, if presented in complaint to me, would have obliged me to insist on his recall. When he thus retired to rest himself for about a year, after the labours of his office, he left behind him a pack of hounds, a groom, a chargé d'affaires, a chasseur, and several other domestics. The amusement of these delegated powers was cat-hunting in the spacious gardens belonging to the Legation. Every day the diversion was pursued, until the neighbourhood was so infested with rats, that serious remonstrances, light as the subject may appear, were presented to me, by gardeners, grocers, oilmen, booksellers and stationers, and other trades; and I condemned to

extermination by poison the more innocent of the offenders.

The sieur Dorcas, the secretary I mentioned, a necessitous and uneducated young person, no sooner found himself in possession of a hundred pounds ayear, than he bought a poney, hired the best saddle and bridle that were to be lett out, presented a bunch of flowers (when the season was somewhat advanced) to the woman of highest rank he met at the *cascine*, and manifested his resolution to be *cavaliere serviente*, wherever he found beauty and cookery. He soon introduced himself to Madame Mozzi, a lady of great personal attractions, good-humoured, witty, well-informed, and whose house enjoys the reputation of an admirable kitchen. The next morning he addressed a note to her, declaring that she had pleased him, and desiring to know at what time she would be ready to receive the first visit of so distinguished and ardent a lover. She answered him as frankly, and proposed that the interview should take place on the ensuing evening. Sieur Dorcas ran to the milliner's, bought a worked frill; to the perfumer's, bought a bottle of eau de Cologne; and borrowed a clean cambric hankerchief to pour it on. Observing that his gloves bore the mark of the bridle, he put

them into his pocket before he knocked at the door. This he did once, and softly. It opened, as by magic. A servant with a lively countenance ushered him upstairs. He passed thro an antechamber filled with fine pictures: every countenance seemed to smile on him, every lanscape bloomed. He had little taste or time for them: onward he followed the servant: the doors of the apartment flew open to him: the whole family was assembled: Sieur Dorcas was announced: all eyes were fixt upon a personage, who had announced himself as the performer of so topping a part. Madame Mozzi and her *aja* rose from their seats; and the former, after smiling most graciously, turned again to the company, and presented Sieur Dorcas, as the *attaché*, who would have done so much honour to them all, if he had not fixt his attentions on the least worthy of the family. They made their obeissances to Sieur Dorcas; *and now*, said Madame Mozzi to her *aja*, *you will do me the favour, my dear friend, to read the elegant note of the British diplomatist.* The *aja* putt on her spectacles, and redd it thro. The husband took Sieur Dorcas by the hand, apologized for the necessity he was under of leaving him so soon after his introduction, and wished him all possible success in his negotiation. The other relatives com-

plimented him on the frankness of the English character, of which they protested they never had seen before so charming a specimen; and the lady told him, with an air of concern, and tender reproof, that she found him somewhat more cold than his note had promised. He bit his lips, lifted up one side of his shirt-collar, bowed as well as he had learnt to bow, and withdrew. He found the servants ranged upon the stairs: his conductor told him it was usual to give a *mancia* on the first good fortune, and hoped he would not forget it.

As it often happens that those who are very wealthy, are far from forward in displaying what they possess, so happens it that, in countries which abound in talents and genius, the governors are careless how little of them is exhibited in their appointments to foren courts. I should be happy to see, as ministers at mine, M. President, men like you, with whom I could converse familiarly and frankly on matters of high importance: and in my opinion no greater compliment could be paid me, by the princes my friends and allies. To delegate as their representatives young persons of no knowledge, no conduct, no respectability, proves to me a neglect of their duty and an indifference to their honour, and no less evidently shews the opinion they entertain of me to be

unworthy and injurious. Trifling men, in such situations, may suit indeed small courts, but not where the sovran enjoys any considerable share of credit, for the rectitude of his views and the arduousness of his undertakings.

This reflexion leads me back again to an enquiry into the last of your positions, that my code provides but faintly and ineffectually for the protection of character. The states of Italy are the parts of shame in the body politic of Europe. I would not hold out an egis to protect a snail: the gardener does not shelter his plants while they are underground. I declare to you, M. Du Paty, that whenever and wherever I find a character to protect, I will protect it.

PRESIDENT.

I am averse to the perpetual maintenance of great armies: but without somewhat of a military spirit there can be little spirit for any thing, as we see in China and India. That the Florentines should have conquered the Pisans, quite astonishes me when I look upon them; at present they could not conquer a hencoop guarded by a cur.

LEOPOLD.

The Italians, when they were bravest, were like tame rabbits; very pugnacious amongst themselves, but crouching, screaming, and submitting to be

torne piecemeal by the smallest creatures of another race. In the consulate of Marcus Valerius, brother of Publicola, and Postumius, the Sabines were conquered: thirteen thousand prisoners were taken in two battles, in the second no Roman was slain.

I want no armies: if ever I should want them, I can procure a much better commodity at the same price: the rations of a Bohemian and of a Tuscan are the same: I would not exchange a good farmer for a bad soldier. I want honest men, and no other glory than that of making them.

PRESIDENT.

If you abolish the convents of monks, you act consistently in abolishing your armies: for the natives of Florence are the smallest and weakest men in Europe, and, whenever we meet one stronger than the generality, we may be sure he derives his origin from the convent. The monks are generally stout, and their offspring is healthy; but this continues for only one generation. The children of your soldiers are mostly weak, like those of your citizens, and from the same cause, indiscriminate venery. The monks have their choice, from the facilities afforded to them by the sacredness of their order, and by the beneficence of confession, advan-

tages in which the soldiery does not participate. In protestant countries the people is always both cleanlier and healthier than in catholic; but I have observed that the religious in the former are mostly the weakest men in the community, in the latter universally the strongest.

LEOPOLD.

As my soldiers are useless to me in the field, I shall call them out more frequently in the churches, when I have reduced the number of ecclesiastics. On all great festivals we have decently smart files of them in the nave. I shall indulge the people with a larger number and oftener.

PRESIDENT.

In Tuscany there are persons of integrity; few indeed, and therefore the more estimable. One honest Italian is worth one hundred thousand honest Englishmen, for such I imagine to be the proportion. Wherever there is a substitute for morality, where ceremonies stand in the place of duties, where the confession of a fault before a priest is more meritorious than never to have committed it, where virtues and duties are vicarious, where crimes can be expiated after death for money, where by breaking a wafer you open the gates of heaven, probity and honour, if they exist at all, exist in the temperament of the in-

dividual. Hence a general indifference to virtue in others; hence the best men in Italy do not avoid the worst; hence the diverging rays of opinion can be brought to no focus; nothing can be consumed by it, nothing warmed.

The language proves the character of the people. Of all pursuits and occupations, for I am unwilling to call it knowledge, the most trifling is denominated *virtù*.

The Romans, detained from war and activity by a calm, termed it *malacia*: the Italians, whom it keeps out of danger, call it *bonaccia* *. I am ashamed to say that we Frenchmen have borrowed this word. We are, it is true, the most courageous people in the world, but we have always been subject to panics by land and to despair by sea.

Love of their country is so feeble, that whatever is excellent they call *pelegrino*.

* On malacia and bonaccia let me remark, that, although the latter supplanted the former, as *Beneventum* did *Maleventum*, yet *malacia* descends not in a direct line from malus (a thing evidently unknown to those who substituted in its place *bonaccia*,) but from μαλακός. *Malus* itself has the same origin. Effeminacy and wickedness were correlative terms both in Greek and Latin, as were courage and virtue. With us softness and folly, virtue and purity. Let others determine on which side lies the indication of the more quiet, delicate, and reflecting people.

So corrupt are they, that softness with them must partake of disease and impurity: it is *morbidezza.*

Three or four acres of land with a labourer's cottage are called a *podere.* Beggarly magnificence of expression!

I saw open in a bookseller's window a boy's dictionary, Dictionarium Ciceronianum, in the page where *heros* was, and found its interpretation *barone, signore.*

Such is their idea of contemplation, and of the subjects on which it should be fixed, that if a dinner is given to a person of rank, the gazettes announce that it was presented *alla Contemplazione della sua Excellenza.*

A lamb's fry is *cosa stupenda.*

Their idea of fighting is exemplified in the word *tirare,* which means both to *drag* and to *strike.*

Strength, which frightens, and finery, which attracts them, are *honesty:* hence *valentuomo* and *galantuomo.*

A well-dressed man is a man of honour, *uomo di garbo.*

Spogliare is *to undress;* the spoils of a modern Italian being his shirt and breeches.

Pride is offended at selling anything: the shop-

keeper tells you that he gives you his yard of shoe-ribbon: *dà*, not *vende*.

A *trinket* is a joy, *gioia*.

One would imagine that *giustiziato* means requited: it means *hanged:* as if justice did nothing else, or had nothing else to do.

LEOPOLD.

I can furnish you with another example in my own profession. *Governare* means to *govern* and to wash the dishes. This indeed is not so absurd at bottom; for there is generally as much dirty work in the one as in the other.

PRESIDENT.

Meschino, formerly *poor* *, is now mischievous, *or bad.*

LEOPOLD.

I am no etymologist, and more than an etymologist is wanted here; but let me remark to you that the word *meschino* is still in use amongst us in the same double acceptation, as the word *wretch* is among the English; and you Frenchmen too employ the word *méchant*, which comes from it, in the same manner. The several words signify to us that wretchedness and wickedness go together.

* Teseo era stato anch' egli un certo protettore e difensore, e benignamente e con amorevolezza haveva ascoltato i preghi degli uomini *meschini*.—Vite di Plutarco da M. Ludovico Domenichi, MDLX.

PRESIDENT.

I see it. Things strike us in another language which we pass over in our own.

Misfortune is criminal: the captive is a wicked man, *cattivo.*

A person is not rendered vile by any misconduct or criminality: but if he has the tooth-ache, he is *avvilito.*

With all their admiration and aptitude for poetry, any grimace or trick of the countenance is called a *verso.* *Fa tanti versi.*

Opera was among the Romans *labour*, as *operæ pretium*, &c. It now signifies the most contemptible of performances, the vilest office of the feet and tongue, whenever it stands alone *by excellence.*

Ostia, a sacrifice (*hostia*) now serves equally to designate the Almighty, and the wafer that seals a billet-doux.

LEOPOLD.

Beware, M. President, that no learned man in his idleness take you to task on the same subject. I would wish to retaliate on you as gently as possible, but I find in one of your expressions that characteristic sportiveness which attends your cruelties, when you committ any. *Amende honorable*, as your jurists call it *in figuris*, is thus defined by

them. Le condamnè est à genoux en chemise, la corde au cou, une torche à la main, et conduit par le bourreau. This *honorable* way in which an offender is persuaded to correct his error, is, according to time and person, accompanied by flagellations, and other ceremonials of honour and devotion, in which the humble minister of justice, the hangman, has the goodness to lend him all the assistence in his power, and indeed to take upon himself the whole of this most painful part of the duty; the person who makes the expiation to honour and the laws, only lending the superficies (or a little more) of his body, while this precursory section of his amendment is going thro.

I have found in twenty of your authors, at the least, the expression, *faire retentir sa voix au milieu &c.* a proof of a noisy people; and perhaps some others might be found of a rather vain one. I must fight for my Tuscans. They have other phrases which prove their good-nature, not the least of merits in any man or any people, and among the first to be commended by a prince.

Their oaths, instead of *peste* and other horrors, are by the kindest and most lovely of the gods, *per Bacco! per Bacco d'India! Fe di Bacco! Corpo di Baccô!* or by the most beautiful of our indigenous plants, as *Cappari! Corbezzoli!*

PRESIDENT.

I do not understand the latter.

LEOPOLD.

Corbezzoli are the berries of the arbutus. Your French *corbeil* comes from the twigs, which are used in making baskets and paniers; and another word, which you like less, *corvée;* loads of stone, earth, manure, &c. are carried on the backs of men and women in round crates of this material.

PRESIDENT.

A stranger is much amused by the designation of your Italian tribunals, the *ruota* criminale*, &c. as if Justice had her wheel, like Fortune, or rather used the same.

Your Highness will permitt me to add one more example. If injustice is done, and redress claimed, it is requisite to perform an execrable act, if the words mean anything, *umiliare una supplica.* Language so base and infamous was never heard in the palace of Domitian, who commanded that he should be called Lord and God.

I could select many more such expressions. In this perversion of moral feeling, it is not to be

* Such is the idea the thing itself presents to us: the word is deduced from the *rolling* and *unrolling* of papers, and is analogous to the *volumen* of the Romans, and the *roll* of the English, which also gives an appellation to a court of judicature.

expected that the laws can always stand upright. It is dangerous for a forener not to visit a commissary of police; but to omitt in an address to him the title of Illustrissimo, is fatal. I conversed the other day with an English gentleman, who had conducted his wife and family to Pistoja, for the benefit of the air. He rented a villa at the recommendation of the proprietor, who assured him that the walls were dry; the only doubt he entertained. Within a few days it rained, and the bedchambers were covered with drops. His wife and child suffered in their health: he expostulated: he offered to pay a month's rent and to quit the premises, insisting on the nullity of an agreement founded on fraud. The proposal was rejected: a court of judicature declared the contract void. The gentleman, to prove that there was nothing light or ungenerous in his motive, gave to his banker, M. Cassigoli, the amount of the six months' rent, to be distributed among respectable families in distress. The proprietor of the house, enraged at losing not only what he had demanded, but also what was offered, circulated a report in the coffeehouses and wherever he went, that the gentleman might well throw away his money, having acquired immense sums by piracy. He is, on the contrary, a literary man, of a life extremely retired. Such expressions could not fail to be in-

jurious to a stranger, in any place whatever, and particularly in a town where perhaps until then no stranger had resided. He appealed to the tribunals, with a result far different from the former. The commissary, to whom the business was referred by them, called the offender to him in private, without informing the plaintiff of his intention. Hence no proof was adduced, no witness was present, and the gentleman knew nothing of the result for several weeks afterwards. It was, an admonition to be more cautious in future, given to a man, who had in succession been servant to two masters, both of whom were found dead without illness; a man who, without any will in his favour, any success in the lottery, any dowery with his wife, any trade or profession, any employment or occupation, possessed twelve thousand crowns. Where justice is refused, neglected, or perverted, the *Presidente del buon Governo* is the magistrate who receives the appeal. The forener stated his case fully to the president, from whom he obtained no redress *.

* Dr. Lotti of Lizzano, on the confines of the Modenese, the reputed son of the emperor P. Leopold, to whom (if I may judge from the coins) he bore a perfect resemblance, was the most learned and courteous man I have ever conversed with in Tuscany. He was rather fond of wine; but with decorum.

LEOPOLD.

As I covered my ears at the commencement, I must at the conclusion. But ill and scandalously as my servants acted, the rank and character of the injured gentleman were imperfectly known to the commissary and the president, who also are ignorant that many of the best families in England are untitled. Here counts and marquisses are more plentiful than sheep and swine, families have orders of knighthood who have not credit for a pound of polenta, and the bravest of whose members would tremble to mount a goat, in their worst breeches.

PRESIDENT.

Your predecessors have softened what was already too soft: and your Highness must give

I spent one of the happiest days of my life in his society, and was about to repeat my visit the following summer, when I heard that my quiet, inoffensive, beneficent friend had been stoned to death by a parishioner.. No enquiry was instituted by government: he had nothing but erudition and virtue to recommend him, and the tears and blessings of the poor. I asked how so unmerited a calamity could have befallen so warm-hearted a creature, and in the decline of life: the reply was, *Chi sa? forse uno sbaglio. Who knows? perhaps it was done by mistake.* What a virtuous and happy people must that be, to which such a loss is imperceptible! I saw him but three times, and lament it, more than I think it right

some consistency to your mud, by exposing and working it, if you desire to leave upon it any durable or just impression. I am afraid it will close upon your footstep the moment you go away.

LEOPOLD.

I hope not. Tuscany is a beautiful landscape with bad figures: I must introduce better.

PRESIDENT.

To speak without reserve or dissimulation, I have remarked this difference between the gentlemen of Florence and those of other nations. While

to express, at the distance of nearly two years. Rest thee with God, kind, gentle, generous Lotti!

A courier who had been in the service of Prince Borghese, went openly by day into the Postmaster's office, stabbed him in the body, fired a pistol through his hand, was confined at Volterra, and released at the intercession of Prince Borghese *in six weeks*.

Whoever shall publish a periodical work, containing a correct and detailed account of irregularities and iniquities in the various courts of law throughout Europe, will accomplish the greatest of all literary undertakings, and will obtain the merit of the staunchest, the truest, and the best of all reformers. No subject is so humble that it may not be recommended by a fit simplicity of style; no story so flat that it may not solicit attention if edged by pointed remarks. The writer will perform one of those operations which are often so admired in Nature, by eliciting a steddy, broad, and beautiful light, from rottenness and corruption.

others reject disdainfully and indignantly from among them any member who has acted publicly or privately with dishonour, these interest themselves warmly in his favour, although they never had visited or known him. It must be from a powerful sympathy, and in the hope, more or less remote and obscure, that they may benefit in the same manner under the same circumstances.

LEOPOLD.

I must begin with what forms the moral character, however my conduct may be viewed by the catholic princes. Few amongst them are better than whipt children, or wiser than unwhipt ones. They are puppets in the hands of priests: they nod their heads, open their mouths, shut their eyes, and their blood is liquefied or congealed at the touch of these impostors. I must lessen their influence by lessening their number. To the intent of keeping up a numerous establishment of satellites in the church militant, a priest is punished more severely for performing twice in the day the most holy of his ceremonies, than for almost any violation of morality. But the popes perhaps have in secret a typical sense of the mass, permitting the priest to celebrate it only once, in remembrance that Christ was sold once only. When we arrive at mystery, a single step farther and we tumble

into the foss of fraud. The Romish church is the general hospital of all old and incurable superstitions from the Ganges to the Po. It is useful to princes as a pigstie is to farmers: but it shall not infect my palace, and shall do as little mischief as possible to my people.

PRESIDENT.

Your Highness, by diminishing the number of priests, will encrease the rate of masses. A few days ago I went into San Lorenzo, and saw a clergyman strip off his gown before the altar with violence and indignation. Enquiring the reason, I was informed that four *pauls* had been offered to him for a mass, which he accepted, and that on his coming into the church, the negotiator said he could afford to pay only three*. There are offices

* The Italians were always, far exceding all other nations, parsimonious and avaricious; the Tuscans beyond all other Italians; the Florentines beyond all other Tuscans. So scandalous an example of it, as occurred a few months ago, is, I hope and believe, unparalleled. Prince ******* married a woman of immense fortune, by whom he has a family of eight children. He took a mistress: the wife languished and died. He gave orders that all her cloaths should be sold by auction in his palace; old gowns, old petticoats, old shifts, old shoes, old gloves; even articles at the value of one penny, such as excited the derision of some, the blushes of others, the horror of not a few.

in the city where masses are bargained for publicly. Purgatory is the Peru of Catholicism: the body of Christ in some of our shops is at the price of a stockfish, in others a fat goose will hardly reach it, and in *Via de' Calzaioli* it is worth a sucking pig.

LEOPOLD.

The Roman states are sadly worse in proportion.

PRESIDENT.

There are more *religious* in that territory than slavemasters in our American islands, and their gangs are under stronger and severer discipline. The refuse of manhood exercises the tyranny of Xerxes in the cloak and under the statutes of Pythagoras.

LEOPOLD.

When violence and usurpation were distracting the empire, can we wonder if the possessors of

There had been no quarrel between the wife and husband. She was beautiful, engaging, sweet-tempered, compliant, domestic. She sank from the world which her virtues had adorned, and had been seven days in her grave, when prostitutes paraded the street before her palace, wearing those dresses in which the most exemplary of mothers had given the last lessons of morality to her daughters. The prince is one of the richest men on the continent: he is supposed to spend about a tenth of his income: and the sale produced fourteen pounds.

knowledge and the lovers of quiet clung together, and contrived the best and readiest means possible, of preserving the little they retained? The sanctuaries of religion, abandoned by the old gods and the old worshippers, served the purpose well. Persecution rendered the new guests only the more united: pity at their sufferings, admiration at their virtues, drew many toward them: miracles were invented, encouraged, propagated. There is something of truth in every thing. Like gold, it is generally found in small quantities, and, as is said of gold, it is universal: even falsehood rests upon it. Contrivances, which at first were requisite and necessary, for the security of a weak and unprotected religion, now began to multiply for its extension and aggrandizement. The credulous, the rich, the slothful, stood prepared for the mark that was to be impressed on them, by the coarse indiscriminating letters of the age. The literate now chose their emperor, as the military chose theirs, only giving him another title, inaugurated by religion. A quieter craft, observing the instability of power, devised and executed at their leisure the institutions best adapted to its maintenance: and by degrees such barriers were erected about the church, as, neither in extent nor in strength, had ever surrounded the pretorium. The pious, who came from a distance, to venerate the simple edi-

fice, the house of a god born in a manger, could not pass nor even look over the high ramparts, and were driven away or punished as criminals if they inquired for it. Somewhat earlier, when the name of pope had not yet been invented, instead of surprise at any worldly advantages, the pastors derived from the tractability of their flocks, it might rather be excited at their moderation. This however soon was over; and such rapacity succeded, as no other religion, no other government, no tyranny, no conquest, has exemplified. In our days, the commander of the faithful in the west is contented if we pay and cloathe his military, permitting them to be taken off our lands for him, and allowing him to discipline them, even in our streets and houses. The more virtuous our subjects are, the less contented are *they*. Every execution-day is a rent-day to them: no fellow is hanged but his halter is their purse-string. The most notorious robber that ever infested Tuscany, was no sooner upon the gibbet, than forty or fifty idler thieves, in white surplices halfway down the hams, ran about our streets, soliciting the eleemosynary paolo from citizen and peasant, to liberate the sinful soul a few years earlier out of purgatory. Can we imagine that crimes will be very rigorously reprehended, by those who derive a revenue from the multiplicity and magnitude of them?

PRESIDENT.

What purgatory may be to any of the dead I cannot tell; but I see that it is a paradise to a great portion of the living. How many dormitories and refectories are warmed with it! how many gardens, lined with orange and citron, are brought into blossom by its well-directed fires! Not Styx, nor Acheron, nor Phlegethon, but Pactolus is now the river that runs thro the infernal regions, leaving its golden sands on the papal shores, the patrimony of Saint Peter.

LEOPOLD.

What do you imagine was the reason, M. Du Paty, why celibacy was imposed on the priesthood, not when it was chaste and virtuous, but at a time when neither the heads of the church nor her other members were any longer pure and upright.

PRESIDENT.

There cannot be conceived a better reason for so extraordinary and unnatural an ordinance, than that the concubines and wives of such dissolute men were, as you may suppose, eternally at variance, and ecclesiastical polity was well aware that they would arouse by degrees, and excite to some inquiry, a supine and dormant world. The pope therefore put down, and suppressed under the piscatory

signet, the more clamorous of the parties. Among the first christians all things were in common but their wives; among those of the papal reformation, the wives seem the only things that were so.

LEOPOLD.

I am apprehensive, M. du Paty, you will be thought here in Italy to entertain but little reverence even for those higher authorities (if any are higher than the pope) on which the foundations of our faith repose; it being known that men of letters in France, including the dignitaries of the church, are inclined toward philosophy.

PRESIDENT.

Sir, I wish they were so: for then they would teach and practise christianity, which is peace and good-will toward men. The partisans of popery have evinced by their conduct, that either the book wheron they found their religion in itself is false, or that those dogmas are so which they pretend to draw from it; otherwise they would not forbid nor discountenance its circulation and publicity. In copying the worst features of every religion, they should at least have omitted this. The Egyptian, the Hindoo, and other priesthoods, kept their sacred books secluded from the people, and said perhaps that they were thus commanded, whether

by dog or by calf, or some such deity: but if the pope believed in the gospel, or ever redd it, he must know that his predecessors, as he calls the apostols, were commanded, on the contrary, to disseminate it among all the nations of the universe.

LEOPOLD.

Catholicism does not appear to be quite so polytheistical among you Frenchmen as among us.

PRESIDENT.

An Italian, a Spaniard, or a Portuguese, has no thought whatever of praying to God. The expression, so common in our language, is unknown, or nearly so, in theirs. Desirous, as I always have been, of finding out the opinions of men on this subject, I accosted one who had been praying, at the entrance of a village, to a little image of earthenware in a niche against a cottage.

You pray then, my good young man; I am happy to observe that you think of your Creator in the days of your youth!

He looked at me with wonder.

Were not you praying to the father of mercies?

O now I understand. I was praying, Sir, to his mother and Saint Zenobio.

Excellently done! but do you never offer up a prayer to God himself?

His reply I must give in his own language.

Mi canzona! Ad Iddio medesimo! solo solo! ma davvero non sono io si poco garbato.

Accustomed, as the people of these countries have been for centuries, to ask favours by means of valets, who speak to the lady's maids, and these to their mistresses, whence the petition goes up to the husband or *cavaliere serviente*, they pursue the same routine in their prayers to heaven: first a prayer to Saint Zenobio; then, with his permission, to the Virgin, who again is requested to seize a suitable opportunity of mentioning the matter to her son, or, at her option, to do it herself, and let him know nothing about the business. Such are the thoughts of those who think the most deeply.

LEOPOLD.

What can be the reason why the pious in your country, and sincere catholics, speak oftener of God than of his son or parent?

PRESIDENT.

The reason I presume is, that our ancestors the Gauls worshipped one superior Being, tho, from indifference to the truth in such matters, Cesar asserts the contrary; and that hence, we still talk as monotheists, while other nations, who were formerly polytheists, retain the language of such; and would perhaps do so, altho the religion of the

country had retained no shadow or resemblance of it *.

LEOPOLD.

No prince ought to be indifferent to religion; but every one ought to the forms and sects of it, so long as they abstain from pretentions of interference with the state. This is an offence which, at the least, should be punished by their suppression. I am supposed to exercise an arbitrary power in this country: yet my interference in the affairs of religion is less extensive than that of your Louis XIV. In his Declaration of 1682 he says, Pour l'interêt de l'Eglise de nôtre royaume, de laquelle nous sommes premier et universel protecteur. According to the former of these words (*premier*) he takes precedency of the pope in the church; and according to the latter (*universel*) he quite excludes him.

PRESIDENT.

Many of our bishops think otherwise, altho the most acute and clear of reasoners, and the

* If Du Paty were now living, what would he say about the report on the project of a law against *sacrilege*, in which the reporters use the word *deicide* (godkilling) and are guided by the jesuits, who would burn you alive for materialism!

most eloquent of expositors, Bossuet, was in this campaign the champion of the king.

LEOPOLD.

Of your bishops there are many who think otherwise; first because many of them think little, and possess no learning; and secondly and mainly, because they have a better chance of being cardinals by adherence to the papacy, certain that they cannot lose their bishoprics by it. Surely I have as much power in my monasteries, as the popes have in my musick-shops.

PRESIDENT.

That is clear.

LEOPOLD.

Nevertheless they have forbidden, under pain of excommunication, to copy the *miserere* of Allegrini, which is only to be sung in the pope's chapel, and by eunuchs. This is an order more conformable to the taste of Nero, than of Christ's vicar.

PRESIDENT.

A countryman of mine, Choron, infringed the edict, and may have his throat cut for it; the offender being excommunicated.

LEOPOLD.

I would willingly see several religions in my

states, knowing that in England and Holland they are checks one upon another. The quaker inverts his eye and rebukes his graceless son, by shewing him how industrious and tractable is the son of some fierce presbyterian: the catholic points to the daughter of a socinian, and cries shame upon his own, educated as she was in the purity of the faith, in the religion of so many forefathers. Catholicism loses somewhat of its poisonous strong savour, by taking root in a well-pulverized well-harrowed soil. As competition levels the price of provisions, so maintains it the just value of sects. Whatever is vicious in one, is kept under by the concourse of others, and each is emulous to prove the superiority of its doctrines by honesty and regularity of life. If ever the English could be brought to one opinion in politics or religion, they would lose the energy of their character and the remains of their freedom. In England the catholics are unexceptionably good members of society, although the gentlemen of that persuasion, I hear, are generally more ignorant than others, partly by the jealous spirit of their church, and partly by an ungenerous exclusion from the universities. They keep, as here, a chaplain in their houses, but always a man of worth, and not combining as in Italy a plurality of incongruous offices. Here a confessor, in many instances, is tutor to

the children, house-steward to the father, and *cavaliere serviente* to the mother. He thinks it would be a mockery of God to call her to confess, without a decent provision of slight transgressions. He cures her indigestions by a dram, her qualms of conscience by a sacrament.

PRESIDENT.

Both morality and learning require the sound of feet running fast behind them, to keep them from loitering and flagging. When Calvinism was making a progress in France, the catholic bishops were learned men; indeed so learned, that Joseph Scaliger, himself a calvinist, acknowledged in the latter part of his life their immense superiority over the rising sect. At present there is only one bishop in France capable of reading a chapter in the Greek testament, which every schoolboy in England, for whatever profession he is intended, must do at eleven years of age. I would then recommend a free commerce both of matter and of mind. I would let men enter their own churches with the same freedom as their own houses; and I would do it without a homily on graciousness or favour: for *tyranny* itself is to me a word less odious than *toleration*.

LEOPOLD.

I am placed among certain small difficulties. Tuscany is my farm: the main object of all pro-

prietors is their income. I would see my cattle fat and my labourers well-cloathed; but I would not permitt the cattle to break down my fences, nor the labourer to dilapidate my buildings. I will preserve the catholic religion, in all its dogmas, forms, discipline, and ceremonies: it is the pommel of a sovran's sword, and the richest jewel in his regalia: no bull however shall squeeze out blood under me, no faggot sweat out heresy, no false key unlock my treasury. The propensity will always exist. The system has been called *imperium in imperio*, very unwisely: it was *imperium super imperio*, until it taught kings to profit by its alphabet, its cyphers, and its flagellations. You complain that I have softened my mud. This is the season for treading and kneading it; and there are no better means of doing so, none cheaper, none more effectual, than by keeping a *posse* of priests upon the platform. America will produce disturbances in Europe by her emancipation from England. The example will operate in part, not principally. Wherever there is a national debt, disproportionably less rapid in its extinction than in its formation, there is a revolutionary tendency: this will spread where there is none, as maladies first engendered in the air are soon communicated by contact to the sound and healthy. Various causes will be

attributed to the effect; even the books of philosophers. All the philosophers in the world would produce a weaker effect in this business than one blind ballad-singer. Principles are of slower growth than passions: and the hand of Philosophy, holden out to all, there are few who press cordially: and who are those? the disappointed, the contemplative, the retired, the timid. Did Cromwell read Plato? did the grocers of Boston read Locke? The true motives, in political affairs, are often very improbable. Men who never heard of philosophy but to sneer at it after dinner, will attribute to it all those evils which their own venality and corruption have engendered, and not from any spirit of falsehood, but from incompetency of judgement and reflexion. What is the stablest in itself is not always so in all places: marble is harder and more durable than timber: but the palaces of Venice and Amsterdam would have sunken into the deep without wooden piles for their foundation. Single government wants those manifold props which are supplied well-seasoned by catholicism. A king indeed may lose his throne by indiscretion or inadvertency, but the throne itself will never lose its legs in any catholic state. Never will any republican or any mixed constitution exist seven years, where the hierarchy of Rome hath exerted its

potency. Venice and Genoa shew no proofs to the contrary: they arose and grew up while the popes were bishops, and ere mankind had witnessed the wonderful spectacle of an inverted apotheosis. God forbid that any corrupt nation should dream of becoming what America is: if it possesses one single man of reflexion, he will demonstrate the utter impracticability of citizenship, where the stronger body of the state, as the clergy must morally be, receives its impulse and agency from without, where it claims to itself a jurisdiction over all, excluding all from any authority over its concerns. This demonstration leads to a sentence, which policy is necessitated to pronounce, and humanity is unable to mitigate.

PRESIDENT.

Theories and speculations, which always subvert religious, never subvert political establishments. Uneasiness makes men shift their postures. National debts produce the same effects as private ones: immorality and a desire of change; the former universally, the latter almost so. A man may well think he pays profusely, who pays a tenth as an ensurance for his property against all the perils of the sea. Does he reason less justly who deems the same sum sufficient for the security of the remainder, in his own lands, in his own

house? No conquered people was ever obliged to surrender such a portion of its wealth, present and reversionary, as in our times has been expended voluntarily, in the purchase of handcuffs and fetters for home-consumption. Free nations, for the sake of doing mischief to others, and to punish the offence of pretending to be like them, have consented that the preparation of grain shall be interdicted in their families, that certain herbs shall never be cultivated in their fields and gardens, that they shall never roast certain beans, nor extract certain liquors, and that certain rooms in their houses shall admitt no light. Domitian never did against his enemies, what these free nations have done against themselves.

The sea-tortoise can live without its brains, an old discovery! men can govern without theirs, an older still!

LEOPOLD.

I can indeed see no reason, why different sects in religion should not converse in the streets, as they are walking to their churches and chapels, with as much good will and good humour, as schoolboys of different ages and classes, going up, at the same hour and for the same purpose, to their appointed forms and respective teachers. Both parties are going for learning and improvement

the younger is the wiser: how long shall it continue so?

PRESIDENT.

I can calculate the period to a day. It will remain so, while the clergy is a distinct body; while a priest is a prince; while he who says at one moment, *I am a servant, the servant of servants;* says at another, *I am a master, the master of masters!*

So long as society will suffer these impositions, and toil under these taxgatherers, and starve and contend and bleed for them, animosity and hatred will deface and desecrate the house of prayer and peace. The interests of the class, and above all of the chiefs, requires it: for from the moment when men begin to understand and support one another, they will listen to them no longer, nor endure them.

LEOPOLD.

I am influenced but little by opinions: they vary the most where they are strongest and loudest. Here they breathe softly, and not against me; for I excite the hopes of many by extinguishing those of few. What I have begun I will continue: but I see clearly where I *ought* to stop, and know to a certainty, which few reformers do, where I *can*. Exempt from all intemperance of persecution, as from all taint of bigotry, I am disposed to see Christianity neither in diamonds nor in tatters: I would

take down her toupee and sell her rouge-box, to procure her a clean shift and inoffensive stockings.

I must persuade both clergy and laity that God understands Italian. Ricci, the bishop of Pistoja, is convinced of this important truth: but many of his diocesans, not disputing his authority, argue that, although God indeed may understand it, yet the saints, to whom they offer up incense, and in whom they have greater confidence, may not; and that being, for the greater part, old men, it might incommode them in the regions of bliss to alter pristine habits.

Warmly and heartily do I thank you, M. Du Paty, for your observations. You have treated me really as your equal.

PRESIDENT.

I should rather thank your Imperial Highness for your patience and confidence. If I have presented one rarity to the Palazzo Pitti, I have been richly remunerated with another. There are only two things which authorize a man, out of office, to speak his sentiments freely in the courts of princes; very small stature and very small probity. You have abolished this most ancient statute, in favour of a middle-sized man, who can reproach himself with no perversion or neglect of justice in a magistrature of twenty years.

CONVERSATION XIII.

DEMOSTHENES

AND

EUBULIDES.

DEMOSTHENES

AND

EUBULIDES*.

EUBULIDES.

You have always convinced me, O Demosthenes, while you were speaking; but I had afterwards need to be convinced again; and I acknowledge that I do not yet believe in the necessity, or indeed in the utility, of a war with Philip.

DEMOSTHENES.

He is too powerful.

EUBULIDES.

This is my principal reason for recommending that we should abstain from hostilities; when you have said that *he* is too powerful, you have also said that *we* are too weak: we are still bleeding from the Spartan.

* Eubulides was a philosopher of Miletus and a dramatic poet. Demosthenes is reported to have been among his scholars.

DEMOSTHENES.

All I could offer in reply, O Eubulides, I have already spoken in public, and I would rather not enlarge at present on the subject. Come, tell me freely what you think of my speech.

EUBULIDES.

In your language, O Demosthenes, there is a resemblance to the Ilissus, whose waters, as you must have observed, are in most seasons pure and limpid and equable in their course, yet abounding in depths of which, when we discern the bottom, we wonder that we discern it so clearly: the same river at every storm swells into a torrent, without ford or boundary, and is the stronger and the more impetuous from resistence.

DEMOSTHENES.

Language is part of a man's character.

EUBULIDES.

It often is artificial.

DEMOSTHENES.

Often both are so. I spoke not of such language as that of Gorgias and Isocrates and other rhetoricians, but of that which belongs to eloquence, of that which enters the heart, however closed against it, of that which pierces like the sword of Perseus, of that which carries us away upon its point, easily as Medea her children, and

holds the world below in the same suspense and terror.

I had to form a manner, with great models on one side of me and Nature on the other. Had I imitated Plato (the writer then most admired) I must have fallen short of his amplitude and dignity; and his sentences are seldom such as could be admitted into a popular harangue. Xenophon is elegant, but unimpassioned, and not entirely free, I think, from affectation. Herodotus is the most faultless and perhaps the most excellent of all: what simplicity! what sweetness! what harmony! not to mention his sagacity of inquiry and his accuracy of description; he could not however form an orator for the times in which we live. Aristoteles and Thucydides were before me: I trembled lest they should lead me where I might raise a recollection of Pericles, whose plainness and conciseness and gravity they have imitated, not always with success. Laying down these qualities as the foundation, I have ventured on more solemnity, more passion; I have also been studious to bring the powers of *action* into play, that great instrument in exciting the affections, which Pericles disdained. He and Jupiter could strike any head with their thunderbolts, and stand serene and motionless; I could not.

EUBULIDES.

Your opinion of Pericles hath always been the same, but I have formerly heard you mention Plato with much less esteem than today.

DEMOSTHENES.

When we talk diversely of the same person or thing, we do not of necessity talk inconsistently. There is much in Plato which a wise man will commend; there is more that will captivate an unwise one. The irony in his Dialogues has amused me frequently and greatly, and the more because in others I have rarely found it accompanied with fancy and imagination. If I however were to become a writer of dialogues, I should be afraid of using it so constantly, often as I am obliged to do so in my orations. Woe betide those who force us into it by injustice and presumption! Do they dare to censure us? they who are themselves the dust that sullies the wing of genius. Had I formed my opinion of Socrates from Plato, I should call Socrates a sophist. Who would imagine on reading Plato, that his master, instead of questioning and quibbling, had occupied his time in shewing the uses and offices of Philosophy? There is as wide a difference between the imputed and the real character of this man, as there is between him who first discovered corn growing, and him who first

instructed us how to grind it and purify it and prepare it for our sustenance.

EUBULIDES.

Before him Pythagoras and Democritus and, earlier still, Pherecydes...

DEMOSTHENES.

Of the former our accounts are contradictory. I entertain no doubt that the knowledge, the prudence, the authority of Pythagoras, were greater than those of any man, who, under the guidance of the Gods, hath enlightened the regions of Europa.

EUBULIDES.

He must have been a true lover of wisdom, as he modestly called himself, to have traveled so far into countries known hardly by name in Greece.

DEMOSTHENES.

He sought some congenial soul. If two great men are existing at the extremities of the earth, they will seek each other.

EUBULIDES.

Greatness is unsociable.

DEMOSTHENES.

It loves itself: it loves what generates it, what procedes from it, what partakes its essence. If you have formed any idea of greatness, O Eubulides, which corresponds not with this description,

efface it and cast it out. I admire in Pythagoras a disdain and contempt of dogmatism, amidst the plenitude of power. He adapted his institutions to the people he would enlighten and direct. What portion of the world was ever so happy, so peaceable, so well-governed, as the cities of Magna Grecia? While they retained his manners they were free and powerful: some have since declined, others are declining, and perhaps at a future and not a distant time they may yield themselves up to despotism. In a few ages more, those flourishing towns, those inexpugnable citadels, those temples which one would deem eternal, will be hunted for in their wildernesses, like the boars and stags. Already there are philosophers who would remedy what they call popular commotions by hereditary despotism, and who think it as natural and reasonable, as that children who cry should be compelled to sleep: and there likewise are honest citizens who, when they have chewed their fig and swallowed it, say; *yes, 'twere well.* What an eulogy on the human understanding! to assert that it is dangerous to choose a succession of administrators from the wisest of mankind, and advisable to derive it from the weakest! There have been free Greeks within our memory, who would have entered into an holy alliance with the

most iniquitous and most insolent of usurpers, Alexander of Pheræ, a territory in which Thebe, who murdered her husband, is praised above all others of both sexes. O Juno! may such marriages be frequent in such countries!

Look at history: where do you find in continuation three hereditary kings, of whom one at the least was not inhuman or weak in intellect? Either of these qualities may subvert a state, exposing it first to many sufferings. In our Athenian constitution, if we are weakly governed, or capriciously, which hardly can happen, the mischief is transitory and reparable: one year closes it; and the people, both for its satisfaction and its admonition, sees that no corruption, no transgression, in its magistrates, is unregarded or unchastised. This of all advantages is the greatest, the most corroborative of power, the most tutelary of morals. I know that there are many in Thrace, and some in Sicily, who would recall my wanderings with the most perfect good-humour and complacency. Demosthenes has not lived, has not reasoned, has not agitated his soul, for them: he leaves them in the quiet possession of all their moulten arguments, and in the persuasive hope of all their bright reversions. Pythagoras

could have had little or no influence on men like these: he raised up higher, who kept them down. It is easier to make an impression upon sand than upon marble: but it is easier to make a just one upon marble than upon sand. Uncivilized as were the Gauls, he with his moderation and prudence hath softened the ferocity of their religion, and hath made it so contradictory and inconsistent, that the first man amongst them who reasons will subvert it. He did not say, *You shall no longer sacrifice your fellow creatures:* he said, *sacrifice the criminal.* Other nations do the same; often wantonly, always vindictively: the Gauls appease by it, as they imagine, both society and the Gods. He did not say, *After a certain time even this outrage on Nature must cease:* but he said, *We have souls which pass into other creatures: our dreams prove it: if they are not reminiscences of what has happened or been represented in our actual life, they must be of what passed before: for from a confusion of brain, to which some attribute them, there can arise nothing so regular and beautiful, as many of these visions which you have all experienced.*

A belief in the transmigration of souls will abolish by-degrees all inhumanity. I know nothing

else that can: in other words, I know nothing else that is worthy to be called religion *.

EUBULIDES.

But what absurdity!

DEMOSTHENES.

I discover no absurdity in making men gentler and kinder. I would rather worship an onion or a crust of bread, than a God who requires me to kill an ox or kid. The idea, not of having lost her daughter, but of having lost her by a sacrifice, fixed the dagger in the grasp of Clytemnestra. Let us observe, O Eubulides, the religion of our country, be it what it may, unless it command us to be cruel or unjust. In religion, if we are right, we do not know that we are so; if we are wrong, we would not. Above all, let us do nothing, and say nothing, which may abolish or diminish in the hearts of the vulgar the sentiments of love and fear: on the contrary, let us perpetually give them fresh excitement and activity, by baring them to the heavens. On the modifications of love it is unnecessary to expatiate; but I am aware that you may demand of me what excite-

* Nothing is less philosophical than such a doctrine. Demosthenes is speaking of religion; which, whenever it is intended for the uncivilized, must contain things marvelous, things absurd to the wiser.

ment is required to fear. Amongst its modifications are veneration and obedience, against the weakening of which we ought to provide and guard, particularly in what relates to our magisterial and military chiefs.

EUBULIDES.

I do not conceive that Pythagoras hath left behind him in Gaul, unless at Massilia, the remembrance of his doctrines or of his name.

DEMOSTHENES.

We hear little of the Gauls. It appears however that this most capricious and most cruel of nations is building cities and establishing communities. The most arrogant, the most ungrateful, the most unthinking of mankind, have not forgotten the wisdom or the services of Pythagoras. Ask them who was their legislator . . . they answer you Samotes: ask them who was Samotes, they reply, *A wise man who came amongst us long ago from beyond the sea*: for barbarians have little notion of times, and run wildly into far antiquity. The man of Samos was in fact their legislator, or rather their teacher, and it is remarkable that they should have preserved the name in such integrity.

Democritus, whom you mentioned, contradicts our senses: he tells us that colours have no colour. But his arguments are so strong, his lan-

guage so clear, his pretensions so modest and becoming, I place more confidence in him than in others: future philosophers may demonstrate to calmer minds what we have not the patience to investigate *.

EUBULIDES.

Plato hath not mentioned him.

DEMOSTHENES.

O greatness! what art thou, and where is thy foundation! I speak not, Eubulides, of that which the vulgar call greatness, a phantom stalking forward from a saltmarsh in Bœotia, or from a crevice in some rock of Sunium or of Taxos †, but the highest, the most illustrious, the most solid among men, what is it! Philosophy gives us arms against others, not against ourselves, not against those domestic traitors, those homestead incendiaries, the malignant passions; arms that are brilliant on the exercise-ground, but brittle in the fight, when the most dangerous of enemies is pressing us. Early love was never so jealous in any one as Philosophy in Plato. He resembles his own

* Newton has elucidated the theory of colours first proposed by Democritus, the loss of whose voluminous works is the greatest that Philosophy has sustained.

† Taxos was rich in silver-mines.

idea of God, whose pleasure in the solitudes of eternity is the contemplation of himself.

EUBULIDES.

It has been suggested to me, that Aristoteles, when he remarks that, by the elongation of the last member in a sentence, a dignity is added to composition, looked towards you, who, as you have often heard the rhetoricians say, are sometimes inattentive or indifferent to nobility of expression.

DEMOSTHENES.

When Aristoteles gives an opinion upon eloquence I listen with earnestness and respect: so wise a man can say nothing inconsiderately: his own style on all occasions is exactly what it should be: his sentences, in which there are no cracks or inequalities, have always their proper tone: whatever is rightly said, sounds rightly.

Ought I to speak nobly, as you call it, of base matters and base men? ought my pauses to be invariably the same? would Aristoteles wish that a coat of mail should be as flowing as his gown? Let peace be perfect peace, war decisive war: but let Eloquence move upon earth with all the facilities of change that belong to the Gods themselves; only let her never be idle, never be vain, never be ostentatious; for these are indications of de-

bility. We, who have habituated ourselves from early youth to the composition of sonorous periods, know that it requires more skill to finger and stop our instrument than to blow it. When we have gained over the ear to our party, we have other work to do, and sterner and rougher. Then comes forward *action*, not unaccompanied by vehemence. Pericles, you have heard, used none, but kept his arm wrapt up within his vest. Pericles was in the enjoyment of that power which his virtues and his abilities so well deserved. If he had carried in his bosom the fire that burns in mine, he would have kept his hand outside. By the contemplation of men like me, Aristoteles is what he is; and, instead of undervaluing, I love him the better for it. Do we not see with greater partiality and fondness those who have been educated and fed upon our farms, than those who come from Orchomenos or Mantinea? If he were now amongst us in Athens, what would he think of two or three haranguers, who deal forth his metaphysics by the pailful in their addresses to the people?

EUBULIDES.

I heard one, some little time since, who believed he was doing so, ignorant that the business of metaphysics is rather to analyse than to involve. He avoided all plain matter, he rejected all idiom ...

DEMOSTHENES.

What an admirable definition have you given, unintentionally, of the worst public speaker possible! I will add, with equal confidence, of the worst writer. If I send to Hymettus for a hare, I expect to distinguish it at dinner by its flavour, as readily, as before, by its ears and feet. The people you describe to me, soak out all the juices of our dialect.

I have been careful to retain as much of our idiom as I could, often at the peril of being called ordinary and vulgar. Nations in a state of decay lose their idiom, which loss is always precursory to that of freedom. What your father and grandfather used as an elegance in conversation, is now abandoned to the populace, and every day we miss a little of our own, and collect a little from strangers: this prepares us for a more intimate union with them, in which we merge at last altogether. Every good writer has much idiom; it is the life and spirit of language; and none ever entertained a fear or apprehension that strength and sublimity were to be lowered and weakened by it. Speaking to the people, I use the people's phraseology: I temper my metal according to the uses I intend it for. In fact no language is very weak in its natural course, until it runs too far;

and then the poorest and the richest are ineffectual equally. The habitude of pleasing by flattery makes a language soft; the fear of offending by truth makes it circuitous and conventional. Free governments, where such necessity cannot exist, will always produce true eloquence.

EUBULIDES.

We have in Athens young orators from the schools, who inform us that no determinate and masculine peculiarities of manner should appear in public: they would dance without displaying their muscles, they would sing without discomposing their lips.

DEMOSTHENES.

I will drag them, so help me Jupiter! back again to their fathers and mothers: I will grasp their wrists so tight, the most perverse of them shall not break away from me. Tempestuous times are coming... another month or two at farthest, and I will throw such animation into their features and their gestures, you shall imagine they have been singing to the drum and horn, and dancing to dithyrambics. The dustbox of metaphysics shall be emptied no more from the schoolroom into the street.

I suspect that I also have heard the very chatterer you mentioned. The other day in the mar-

ketplace, I saw a vulgar and clumsy man lifted on a honey-barrel by some grocers and slave-merchants, and the crowd was so dense around me that I could not walk away. A fresh-looking citizen near me nodded and winked at the close of every sentence. Dissembling as well as I could my impatience at his importunity, *Friend*, said I, *do believe me, I understand not a syllable of the discourse.*

Ah Demosthenes, whispered he, *your time is fairly gone by: we have orators now whom even you, with all your acuteness and capacity, as you yourself have acknowledged to me, cannot comprehend.*

Whom will they convince? cried I.

Convince! cried my narrator; *who ever wished to be persuaded in any matter of importance or utility? a child, if you tell him a horrible or a pathetic story, is anxious to be persuaded it is true; men and women, if you tell them one injurious to the respectability of a neighbour. Desire of persuasion rests and dies here. We listen to those whom we know to be of the same opinion as ourselves, and we call them wise for being of it; but we avoid such as differ from us; we pronounce them rash before we have heard them, and still more so afterwards, lest we should be thought at*

any time to have erred. We come already convinced: we want surprise, as at our theatres, astonishment, as at the mysteries of Eleusis.

But what astonishes, what surprises you?

To hear an Athenian talk two hours together, hold us all silent and immovable as the figures of Mercury before our doors, and find not a single one amongst us that can carry home with him a thought or an expression.

Thou art right, I exclaimed; *he is greater than Triptolemus: he not only gives you a plentiful meal out of chaff and husks, but he persuades you that it is a savoury repast.*

By Jupiter! swore aloud my disenchanted friend, *he persuades us no such thing: but every one is ashamed of being the first to acknowledge, that he never was master of a particle out of all he had listened to and applauded.*

I had the curiosity to inquire who the speaker was.

What! do not you know Anædestatus! said he, making a mark of interrogation upon my ribs, with a sharper elbow than, from his countenance, I could have imagined had belonged to him; *the clever Anædestatus, who came into notice as a youth, by the celebration in verse of a pebble at the bottom of the Cephisus. He forthwith was*

presented to Anaglos, who experienced a hearty pleasure in seducing him away from his guardians. Anaglos on his deathbed (for the Gods allowed him one) recommended the young Anædestatus warmly to his friends: such men have always many, and those the powerful. Fortunate had it been for our country if he had pilfered only the verses he pronounced. His new patrons connived at his withdrawing from the treasury no less than six hundred talents.

Impossible! six hundred talents are sufficient for the annual stipend of all our civil magistrates, from the highest to the lowest, and of all the generals in our republic and its dependencies.

It was before you came forward into public life, O Demosthenes: but my father can prove the exactness of my statement. The last little sip from the reservoir was seventy talents for a voyage to Lesbos, and a residence there of about three months, to settle the value of forty skins of wine owing to the Lesbians in the time of Thrasybulus. This, I know not by what oversight, is legible among the accounts.*

Indignant at what I heard, I threatened to call him before the people.

* Seventy talents, in round numbers, 14000 pounds sterling.

Let him alone; said slowly in an undervoice my prudent friend: *he has those about him who will swear, and adduce the proofs, that you are holding a traiterous correspondence with Philip or Artaxerxes.*

I began to gaze in some indignation on his florid and calm countenance, he winked again, again accosted me with his elbow, and withdrew.

EUBULIDES.

Happy Athenians! who have so many great men of so many kinds, all peculiar to yourselves, and can make one even out of Anædestatus.

CONVERSATION XIV.

BONAPARTE

AND

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

BONAPARTE

AND

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

PRESIDENT.

SIRE, while the car of Victory is awhile suspended in its course, and mothers are embracing those pledges of affection, which a frightful Revolution hath spared to their maternity, happy France is devising, under the auspices of her immortal hero, new pangs and afflictions for the tyrants of the ocean. The radiant star that shone upon your Majesty's nativity, throws a lustre that eclipses the polar. It embellishes our soil, and renders it fruitful in all those resources of industry, which will for ever keep it independent of distant and less happy climates. The beet-root, indigenous plant, satisfied all the wishes of a nation at once the most elegant and luxurious. *Frenchmen, I am contented with you,* said her tutelary Genius:

yes, your Majesty said it. Suddenly a thousand voices cry, *Let us make fresh sacrifices: we have wished; it is not enough; we will do more.*

Ardent to fulfill their duties, and waiting but to be instructed how, the brave youth, and those whose grey hairs are so honorable, implore that paternal wisdom which never will cease to watch over them, that they may receive those august commands which will accomplish their destinies.

The enemy no longer pollutes our soil: France recovers her attitude. Your Majesty wishes no new provinces: greater triumphs, wider dominion, to the successor of Charlemagne and of Trajan! That mighty mind, to bless a beloved and grateful people, shall make the animal kingdom confederate with the vegetable. Such are his conquests: the only ones that remain for him to atchieve.

From the calm of their retreats the sages of France step forth: and behold the decree which your Majesty had already uttered at the bottom of their hearts.

DECREE.

To put our implacable enemies to confusion, to drive proud Albion to despair, to abolish the feudal system, to wither for ever the iron arm of despotism, and to produce, or rather to place within the reach of all your Majesty's subjects,

those luxuries which a long war, excited by the cupidity of the monopolizing islanders, seemed to have interdicted to our policy, and which our discretion taught us manfully to resign, it is proposed that every regiment in the French service be subjected to a mild and beneficent diabetes. Our chemists and physicians, ever labouring for the public good, have discovered that this disposition of the body, which if improperly managed might become a disease, is attended with the most useful results, and produces a large quantity of the saccharine matter.

The process was pointed out by Nature herself, who also did more, in the person of your Majesty, and of several of the Grand Dignitaries of the Empire, when the barbarians of the North flew from their capital, which they reduced to ashes, and threw themselves in consternation on the Vistula, the Oder, and the Elbe, to the very shores of the Cimbrian Chersonese.

I therefor have the honour of submitting to your Majesty, that the sugar, the produce of this simple operation, be made subsidiary to that of the beet-root in the proportion of one-third; and that this lively and long-desired sugar, so salutary to man from its prior relationship with his constituent principles, and so eager for its reunion, be the

only sugar used in the French empire, and among the good and faithful allies of your Majesty: and further, that after the expiration of fourteen years, every Power in amity with France may fabricate it within its own territory.

His Majesty the Emperor of the French, King of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, and Mediator of Switzerland, was graciously pleased to make the following reply:

Sir, president of my senate, I am content with you. My ministers of war and of the interior shall be charged to carry your proposition into effect.

Nothing in this address is exaggerated. An amusing and instructive volume might be composed of the speeches made to Bonaparte and Louis XVIII.

The adulation in this falls very far short of that presented to Charles X by M. le comte de Sèze, president of the court of cassation. The Frenchman who should venture to write the same words in irony would be sent to prison. I transcribe one sentence.

Tous les Bourbons se ressemblent: ils sont tous de dignes descendans de St. Louis et de Henri IV. Ce sont toujours les mêmes vertus, *la même foi, la même clemence, le même amour pour le peuple, le même desir de concilier les libertés publics et les droits sacrès du trône.*

He delivered this address in the time of Ferdinand VII of Spain and Ferdinand IV of Naples.

Whoever is about to describe the character of some remarkable man, considers first how much invention and acuteness he can display, and secondly how best he can bring into order and congruity, or what the painters call *keeping*, his observations and reflexions. For which reason, it rarely has happened that we carry in our mind from these writers a resemblance that is not illusory or overcharged. In all great men there are discordances, as there are inequalities in all great substances. It is only from a collection of facts, generally too minute to be conveyed in the paniers from which public curiosity is fed, that we are enabled to judge fairly and fully.

There is little perfect truth in the most sagacious of historians, and little pure love of it in the best of men. We are as unwilling to exchange our thoughts for another's as our children, whatever more they may possess of strength or beauty; and the way to conciliate our suffrages is not by dictating and teaching, but by laying before us evidences and testimonies, by collecting what may corroborate them from circumstances, and by raising us to the dignity of judges. The ancients drew characters; we discourse on them.. a much easier matter.. every thing now is compendious and economical: we make soups from bones, and histories from metaphysics.

Bonaparte seems to me the most extraordinary of mortals;

because I am persuaded that so much power was never acquired by another with so small an exertion of genius, and so little of any thing that captivates the affections; or maintained so long unbroken in a succession of such enormous faults, such scandalous disgraces, such disasterous failures and defeats. I investigate him with the same dispassionate attention, as Lacèpede would the spine of a serpent from Surinam, or Cuvier the jaws of a mammoth from the Ontario.

All persons who are elevated to high rank, however modest and virtuous, assume more or less of a fictitious character, but congenial and agnate, if I may say it, with the former. Bonaparte would be, whatever he had last read or heard of... Brutus or Borgia, Frederick or Charlemagne. All appeared best that were most striking; no matter for what; and not only a book whenever it fell in his way, or a story when he had patience to listen to it, but even a new suit of cloaths, changed him suddenly. If his hair had been clipt in the morning, he was at noon a Marius, at night a Sylla: no sooner had he put on a court-dress, than he took a lesson of dancing; for Louis XIV danced; no sooner the uniform of a marshall, than he tried to sing; for Villars sang.

Whoever is an imitator, by nature, choice, or necessity, has nothing stable: the flexibility which affords this aptitude, is incompatible with strength.

Bonaparte's knowledge of chorography, to which many attribute a certain part of his successes, was extremely limited. In a conversation with Count Giovio at Como *, a few days after the Austrians had first abandoned Milan, he inquired whether the Larius ran into the lagunes of Mantua. The memory of this excellent man is still fresh in the memory of

* Published by Ostinelli, Como, 1796.

his fellow citizens and friends: no one ever doubted his veracity. So long ago as the year 1796, in which his relation was published, he stated that Bonaparte, in his first campaign, had permitted or ordered his sick and wounded, past service, not to be carried to the hospitals or entrusted to the care of the religious and beneficent, but to be left on the field, or killed, or thrown into the rivers. He informs us that many, on somewhat recovering from their lamentable state, went mad from thirst and hunger, and that among those who were first cast into the water, the hands of many, as they clung in agony to the barks, were broken.

Fortunate! not he who can restrain his indignation or his tears at this recital; but he who, turning his eyes upon a Sidney, as he waves away the water from his own parched lips to the wounded soldier near him, can say, *This was my countryman, that my enemy.*

Much hath been repeated of the studious and retired habits of his youth. I had inquired into these matters, long before I read the little narrative I have quoted; the inquiry would otherwise have been superfluous; for no very studious man was ever very cruel: no two things in nature have less affinity than violence and reflexion. M. St. Leger, lieutenant-colonel of the regiment in which he was ensign, told me that he never, at that period, had heard of his progress in any branch of the mathematics; that he was chiefly remarkable for the dirtiness of his hands and linen, his vulgar pronunciation and phrases, his aversion to the society of the officers, and his propensity towards the least respectable of the privates. This also would have been corrected by study. If Pompey had read like Cesar, he might not indeed have possessed the clemency and amenity of that most accomplished man, nor have been in any respect worthy to be called his rival, but he

would certainly have been less contracted and self-sufficient, less unsteddy and impatient, less vindictive and ferocious.

I remember no general, worthy of the name, reviling the character of those military men who performed their duty against him: for Cesar in his *Anti-Cato* did not attack the captain, but the senator and the patriot. Bonaparte left unuttered no term of ungovernable rage and vulgar contumely, when Sir Sydney Smith precluded him from the conquest of Europe by his defence of Acre.

Spannochi, governor of Leghorn, refused to open the gates to him, then at peace with the Granduke. Intending a surprise, he had made a forced march, and expecting no resistence he had brought no cannon with him. He summoned the governor to surrender the town and citadel, who refused both the one and the other until he had orders from Florence. They arrived the next day, and the brave Spannochi was exiled to Sienna, but not before the allie of the Granduke had cursed him, called him by that appellation so familiar to the lower French, seized his epaulette, spit upon him, and kicked his shin. History for her own sake must soften some characters and equivocate on some facts. She treads confidently and firmly upon blood; she follows her clue unhesitatingly through all the labyrinths of mystery and of crime; she is embarrassed only by vulgarity and baseness. We feel a deep interest whenever great masses of mankind are moved, and seldom think or are altogether ignorant what trifling things are the movers.

Bonaparte was invidious of the dead almost to the same degree as of the living: one time he asserted that Marlborough owed his successes to Eugene, another that Eugene owed his to Marlborough; and any officer would have been ruined who had suggested, that Marlborough was not present at the battle

of Belgrade. In a conversation at Varese, just before his visit to Como, he appears to have mistaken Gustavus Adolphus for Charles XII. On hearing that the army of Gustavus had penetrated into Italy by the lake of Como, of which a terrific account is given in the Latin letters of Sigismund Boldoni, he denied the fact, and added, *That madman never thought about Italy: he had other affairs, other interests; he was sans tactique, sans calcul.* And yet Napoleon in his youth was an historian. He shewed his manuscript to Paoli: it was such as might have been expected from an admirer of Ossian. Paoli, not long before his death, mentioned the fact at Clifton, and said he believed the young man had never pardoned the freedom of his advice, in recommending that the work should be delayed a little, until the impetuosity of his genius had subsided. I should have imagined that the sentences were short, as from the tripod; the General said that, on the contrary, they were excessively verbose, strangely metaphorical, without any regard to punctuation, or rather to that upon which punctuation is founded; that, when you had come, as you believed, to the end of your march, you were to start again; and often, on setting out, you were suddenly stopt and countermanded.

His discipline hath been extolled, and examples are cited of soldiers, in every campaign, shot for petty thefts. To avoid all examination into the wealth of his dukes and princes, such as Cambaceres, Fouchè, Talleyrand, Torlonia, and several of his marshals and *grand dignitaries*, the General Mouton, when he dined at the Escurial, which he did every day, with the king and queen of Spain, took away the plate after dinner, until none was left. This fact, reported to me in the country where it occurred, has been since confirmed to me at Florence, by my friend cavaliere Galiano, who sate regularly at the same table and was chamberlain to the king

Whatever in different men may have been the difference of punishment for the same offence, where society was interested; however it may have been permitted by special privilege that he who had renounced the deity might renounce the laws, that he who had abjured the bishop might supersede the citizen; all offences were equally unpardonable which were committed against Napoleon. Another proof of a weak intellect: not that forgiveness is any proof of a strong one. Offences that can be pardoned should never be taken: Bonaparte took them indiscriminately and voraciously, as his food. There is no trouble or address in finding them, and in shewing them there is no wisdom or content.

His ideas of a ruling star present a still more signal indication of a vacillating and ill-composed mind. He knew nothing of judicial astrology, which hath certain laws assigned to it, and fancied he could unite it with atheism, as easily as the iron crown with the lilies; not considering that ruling stars themselves must have a ruler, and must obey, far more certainly than they can indicate, his designs and will. Afterwards he laid by the star, and took up the crucifix to play with; on which some sweeter recollections and more delightful hopes might have reposed, if ever he could have brought himself to the persuasion, that either a man or a god would suffer pain, or disseminate good, gratuitously. In the same manner and degree as he was inconsistent in principle he was irresolute in action. He lost his presence of mind when he advanced to dissolve the representatives of the people; he lost it at the battle of Marengo; and when the allies were marching into Paris, he appeared to be deprived, not of his judgement only and his senses, but of locomotion.

In one thing he was singular, and altogether different from every other man: when he had accomplished his design, he was as fond of appearing dishonest as he was satisfied with

having been so: he was the only pickpocket in the world that ever laid before the people the instruments of his trade, and shewed ostentatiously how he had used them. Indeed he had few secrets to keep. He invaded the territory of nations, to whom any possible change might reasonably appear a gainful speculation. Neither force nor fraud, nor bribery itself, however largely and judiciously administered, subverted the continental states: it was effected by the credulity of their hopes and the incapacity of their rulers. His attack was against the cabinet: those within cried for quarter, gave a province or two for a ransom, kept their places resolutely, (who would abandon them in times so critical?) complimented their master, rang their church-bells, fired their jubilee-cannon, if one was left; for, after so fierce a contest with an enemy so powerful, they had surrendered only... their country. Austria and Prussia fell; they had kings and kings' servants within: Spain and Portugal, unsuspicious, unprepared, undisciplined, unarmed, resisted successfully; their kings and kings' servants stood without. Where there are interests, real or apparent, distinct from those of the community, that, whatever it be, wherin they lie, should be shoveled down and carried off; for there is the ground upon which the enemy will mount his first masked battery. Everywhere kings and oligarchies soon seconded Bonaparte; nations spurned and expelled him. Of his fidelity or infidelity toward his allies, I have nothing here to remark, other than that, from whatever motive, he did greatly and incomparably more service, to several who had fought against him, and, after discomfiture and subjugation, had become his friends, than some governments, which boast loudly of their good faith and generosity, to the most faithful and persevering of their confederates. I have truly no leisure for discoursing, and could excite no interest

if I did, on princes first degraded into crimp-sergeants, then caparisoned like cooks and ostlers for billets and relays, then running the gauntlet, and drummed from their dominions; on princes in short who felt, and whose conduct has made others feel, that even this was clemency. The description of tyrants is at least a stirring thing: it is like walking over red-hot ploughshares; and the vulgar are not the first in pressing on to an exhibition so strange and antiquated.

Bonaparte had perhaps the fewest virtues and the faintest semblances of them, of any man that has risen by his own efforts to supreme power: and yet the services he rendered to society, incommensurate as they were with the prodigious means he possessed, were great, manifold, and extensive. Never had been such good laws so well administered over so considerable a portion of Europe: never was right obtained with so moderate a cost; never was injury so speedily redressed. Two of the bravest and most orderly nations of the continent received the benefit of excellent kings at his hands. Bernadotte and Louis Bonaparte, the most upright men of their order, gave no signs, either by violence or rapacity, by insolence or falsehood, that they had been nurtured in the feverish bosom of the French Republic. By his insatiate love of change, by his impatience to *see* any thing, or to *be* any thing, long together, his mild, intelligent, and virtuous brother, was forced to abdicate a throne, which he mounted amidst the curses of the people and descended amidst their tears. That he might not be an oppressor he ceased to be a king; and his short unquiet reign is mentioned with gratitude, by the most republican and least sensitive members of the great European family.

Instead of scoring maps and shifting kings, Napoleon could have effected more than Henry IV designed. The road was

paved for him with well-broken materials and well rolled over. There was hardly a statesman in Europe of capacity enough to direct a workhouse, or write a fair copy of a washerwoman's bill. Energy was extinct upon the continent: in England it was displayed by the crazy fanatics, who wandered from field to marketplace, from marketplace to field, roaring to the people that they were damned; a truth which indeed they might have discovered by themselves, if they had only put their hands into their pockets. While, as Kleber says in the Dialogue, *throughout the whole territory of France, throughout the range of all her new dominions, not a single man of abilities was neglected,* in England son succeded to father in the oligarchy, and expeditions were formed just weighty and durable enough to give fortunes to those who had squandered them. Of our generals, the most distinguished then employed was a body that rose from bed after midday; of which when orders were requested, the first answer was, *his lordship is at breakfast;* the second, *his lordship is at lunch;* the third, *his lordship is at dinner;* the fourth, *his lordship is dead-drunk.* He, and if the gazettes informed him right, a part of his army returned home. The armament had been directed, first against an island, where fevers are as periodical as rains under the tropics, and ultimately against a fortified city: neither the climate of the one nor the strength of the other was known by the wisest of the ministers, altho there is hardly a ginshop in St. Giles, where some smugler or smugler's boy might not have been found, who could have given the information. The want of it seemed so shameful, that one of the ministry, in that hurry and confusion of intellect which involve all his words and actions, said in parliament, *that he knew it; but that he wished to let his colleague have his own way;* forgetting that the deference cost the nation an army, and heedless that

it cost her a disgrace. His colleague was angry, some say ashamed, and was determined to shew that, if he was unfit to direct a council, he was not unable to direct a pistol: a far higher qualification in his country. The choice of the commander was more easily defended: no member of the cabinet blushed at that.

I have dwelt the longer on these characters, from the same principle as the sight, after rocks, ruins, and precipices, reposes upon a flat surface, tho fen or quagmire. On Bonaparte I have thrown together my materials as I caught them from him, not wishing to represent a whole, where no whole existed: he was courtier and postilion, sage and assassin, quicker than the pen could trace the words. He never was observed in a moment of highly bad or highly good humour, without expressing it by some boisterous sally of ill-breeding. Even those who had seen him daily, and knew him well, stood in astonishment sometimes at the discrepancy between his language and his office, at the disparity between the action of his hands and his embroidered mantle. Be it remembered, that, if I have represented him as a thing not luminous in itself, I have forborne to represent him as one in which all light is absorbed, or upon which none can fall. He did both greater evil and greater good than all the other potentates of his time united: the larger part of the evil he did, they perpetuate; and nearly all the good they abolish. Priestcraft and oligarchy, the two worst of curses, are restored throughout Europe, and royalets are only plucked forth from under his coop, to be encaged and hoodwinked by their old decoy-men.

After taking up, from one side and the other of this strange phenomenon, the brighter parts and the darker, in as just proportions as I could,

Treis imbris torti radios, treis nubis aquosæ,

I would divert the public mind from dissatisfaction at the present, by shewing in brief retrospect the last example of his selfishness. In the retreat from Moscow he provided only for his own security: the famished and the wounded were without protection. Those, to the amount of forty thousand, who supplied the army with occasional food by distant and desperate excursions, were uninformed of its retreat: they perished to a man, and caused to perish by their disappearance a far greater number of their former comrades. Forty miles of road were excavated in the snow. The army seemed a phantasmagoria: no sound of horses' feet was heard, no wheel of waggon or artillery, no voice of man. Regiment followed regiment in long and broken lines, between two files of soldiers the whole way. Some stood erect, some reclined a little, some had laid their arms beside them, some clasped them; all were dead. Several of these had slept in that position, but the greater part had been placed so, to leave the more room; and not a few, from every troop and detachment, took their voluntary station amongst them. The barbarians, who at other seasons rush into battle with loud cries, rarely did so. Skins covered not their bodies only but their faces, and, such was the intensity of cold, they reluctantly gave vent, from amidst the spoils they had taken, to this first and most natural expression of their vengeance. Their spears, although often of soft wood, as the beech, the birch, the pine, remained unbroken, while the sword and sabre of the adversary cracked like ice. Feeble from inanition, inert from weariness, and somnolent from the iciness that enthralled them, they sank into forgetfulness with the Cossacks in pursuit and coming down upon them, and even while they could yet discern, for they looked more frequently to that quarter, the more fortunate of their comrades marching home. The gay and lively Frenchman, to whom war had been sport and pastime, was

now reduced to such apathy, that, in the midst of some kind speech which a friend was to communicate to those he loved the most tenderly, he paused from rigid drowsiness, and bade the messenger adieu. Some, it is reported (and what is unnatural is, in such extremity, not incredible) closed their eyes and threw down their muskets, while they could use them still, not from hope nor from fear, but part from indignation at their general, whose retreats had always been followed by the total ruin of his army; and part, remembering with what brave nations they had once fought gloriously, from the impossibility of defeating or resisting so barbarous and obscure an enemy.

Napoleon moved on, surrounded by what guards were left to him, thinking more of Paris than of Moscow, more of the conscripts he could enroll than of the veterans he had left behind him.

The name of Bonaparte (what no writer has remarked) seems to be derived from *Bon-reparte*, now called *San Gennasio di buon riposo*, a village under Samminiato, in which town the family resided afterwards. The name of *Bon-reparte* is preserved by Benedict of Peterborough in his *Life of Henry II of England*, wherin are described the halts of Philippe Auguste . . . *per Castellum Florentinum, et per Seint Denys de Bon-reparte*, &c.

Altho I did my utmost in pursuing this tyrant to death, recommending and insisting on nothing less, yet I acknowledge that I am sorry he is dead. Seeing what I see, I would preserve him as the countryman preserves the larger ant, to consume the smaller, more numerous, and more active in mischief.

Europe wants a fierce housedog, to keep in check those impudent little thieves, who molest and plunder her in all directions, shouting and laughing at her slowness and imbecility.

CONVERSATION XV.

THE ABBÉ DELILLE

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

THE ABBÉ DELILLE

AND

WALTER LANDOR.

THE Abbé Delille was the happiest of creatures, when he could weep over the charms of innocence and of the country, in some crowded and fashionable côterie at Paris. We embraced most pathetically on our first meeting there, as if the one were condemned to quit the earth, the other to live upon it.

DELILLE.

You are reported to have said that descriptive poetry has all the merits of a pockethankerchief that smells of roses?

LANDOR.

This, if I said it, is among the things which are neither false enough nor true enough to be displeasing. But the Abbé Delille has merits of his own. To translate Milton well, is more laud-

able than originality in trifling matters; just as to transport an obelisk from Egypt, and to erect it in one of the squares, must be considered a greater labour than to build a new chandler's shop.

DELILLE.

Milton is indeed extremely difficult to translate; for, however noble and majestic, he is sometimes heavy, and often rough and unequal.

LANDOR.

Dear abbé, porphyry is heavy, gold is heavier: Ossa and Olympus are rough and unequal. On the contrary, the steppes of Tartary are high, but of uniform elevation: there is not a rock, nor a birch, nor a cytisus, nor an arbutus, upon them, great enough to shelter a new-dropt lamb. Level the Alps one with another, and where is their sublimity? Raise up the vale of Tempe to the downs above, and where are those sylvan bays and harbours, in which the imagination watches while the soul reposes; those recesses in which the Gods partook the weaknesses of mortals, and mortals the enjoyments of the Gods!

You have treated our poet with all courtesy and attention: in your trimmed and measured dress he might be taken for a Frenchman. Do not think me flattering. You have conducted Eve

from Paradise to Paris, and she really looks prettier and smarter than before she tripped. With what elegance she rises from a most awful dream! you represent her (I repeat your expression) as springing up *en sursaut*, as if you had caught her asleep, and tickled the young creature on that sofa.

Homer and Virgil have been excelled in sublimity by Shakespear and Milton, as the Caucasus and Atlas of the old world by the Andes and Cordilleras of the new: but you would embellish them all.

DELILLE.

I owe to Voltaire my first sentiments of admiration for Milton and Shakespear.

LANDOR.

He stuck to them as a woodpecker to an old forest-tree, only for the purpose of picking out what was rotten. He has made the holes deeper than he found them, and, after all his cries and chatter, has brought home but scanty sustinence to his starveling nest.

DELILLE.

Voltaire is not always light, nor deficient in fire.

LANDOR.

Even smoke has its solid parts, and blazes sometimes.

DELILLE.

You must acknowledge that there are fine verses in the tragedies of Voltaire?

LANDOR.

Whenever such is the first observation, be assured, M. l'Abbé, that the poem, if heroic or dramatic, is bad. Should a work of this kind be excellent, we say, *How admirably the characters are sustained! what delicacy of discrimination! There is nothing to be taken away, or altered, without an injury to the part or to the whole.* We may afterwards descend on the versification. In poetry there is a greater difference between the good and the excellent, than there is between the bad and the good. Poetry has no golden mean: mediocrity here is of another metal, which Voltaire however had skill enough to encrust and polish. In the least wretched of his tragedies, whatever is tolerable is Shakespear's; but, gracious Heaven! how deteriorated! When he pretends to extoll a poet, he chooses some defective part, and renders it more so whenever he translates it. I will repeat a few verses from Metastasio, in favour of my assertion. Metastasio was both a better critic and a better poet, altho of the second order in each quality; his tyrants are less philosophical, and his chambermaids less dogmatic. Vol-

taire was however a man of abilities, and author of many passable epigrams, besides those which are contained in his tragedies and heroics; tho it must be confessed that, like your Parisian lackeys, they are usually the smartest when out of place.

DELILLE.

What you call epigram gives life and spirit to grave works, and seems principally wanted to relieve a long poem. I do not see why what pleases us in a star, should not also please us in a constellation. The coarser bread is that of the larger loaf; we should therefor put into it more salt and leaven. Epigram and versification are the main secrets of French poetry; to which must be added an exactness of thought and a brevity of expression: such for instance as we admire in Boileau. But you promised me something of Metastasio.

LANDOR.

I will repeat the lines, with Voltaire's observations.

The king of Parthia is brought in chains before the emperor Hadrian. He has leisure for all the following paraphrase, by which he would signify that his ruin itself shall be subservient to his revenge.

Sprezza il furor del vento
Robusta quercia, avvezza
Di cento verni e cento
Le ingiurie a tolerar.
E se pur cadde al suolo,
Spiega per l' onde il volo,
E con quel vento istesso
Va contrastando il mar.

Con quel vento istesso! it must make haste then... Voltaire had forgotten the art of concealing his insincerity, when he praised as a *sublime air* the worst and most farfetched thought in all the operas of Metastasio. He could read Italian poetry, he could write French: we have seen how he judged of the least familiar; let us now inquire how he judges of the most. He considers, then, the following lines in *Mithridate* as a model of perfection.

J'ai sçu par une longue et penible industrie
Des plus mortels venins prevenir la furie.
Ah! qu'il m'*eut* mieux valu, plus sage *ou* plus heureux,
Et repoussant les traits d'un amour dangereux,
Ne pas laisser remplir d'ardeurs empoisonnées
Un cœur dejà glacé par *le froid des années.*

Alas! the cold of his years, in comparison with the cold of his wit, is but as a flake of snow to a mass of frozen mercury.

DELILLE.

There often are quickness and spirit in the criticisms of Voltaire: but these, I acknowledge, do not constitute a good critic, altho a good critic will not have been such without them.

LANDOR.

Among the number of his futile and rash remarks, he declares that nothing in Homer is equivalent to Hesiod's description of Pandora. The homely and dull poem of Hesiod is indeed to a certain degree enlivened by it: I speak of his *Works and Days;* for the other two are worth nothing, whether his or not. But if Voltaire could have redd a sentence of Greek, even without understanding one word, the music of those verses in the Odyssea, imitated so well by Lucretius*, on the habitations of the Gods, and of those others where the mother of Ulysses † tells him the cause

* Odys. vi. v. 42.

† Odys. xi. v. 197. Those on Anticlea are the only verses I can remember to have imitated from any one. Circe lays Ulysses asleep, and appears to him in the form of Penelope:

Jam procul absentem, jam desine flere sepultam,
O Laertiade! nulli datur inter Achivos
Conjugibus caris olim optatisque redire
Incolumi natis; has improbus occupat ardor,
Hos agit extorres patrio violentia regno.

of her decease would have checked him in the temerity of his decision. Nothing can excell the harmony of these passages, and the poetry they contain is equally perfect. How contemptible then is that critic, and how greatly more so that poet, who prefers a very indifferent piece of satire, not only to these, but to the parting of Hector and Andromache, and to the interview of Priam and Achilles.

DELILLE.

Acknowledge at least that in tales and in history he has done something.

LANDOR.

Yes, he has united them very dexterously. In the lighter touches of irony and derision he excels both Rabelais and Moliere; but in that which requires a certain vigour of conception, and there is a kind which does require it, he falls short of Cer-

At me, mille procis ad fata extrema petitam,
Obtestor superûm (si fas modo!) numina divûm,
Nec tetigit novus ullus amor, *nec funere mersit*
Intempesta dies, nec amaræ tela Dianæ,
Sed tua perpetuo cura infandique labores,
Omnibus heu terris iterati atque omne per æquor,
Totque malis luctata super *tua mitis imago*
Me desiderio confectam miscuit umbris.

Ulysses in Argirippâ.

vantes and of Swift. You have other historians not only more faithful, but more powerful in style and more profound in thought. I do not even place him on a level with our Hume, and hardly with Robertson, altho in composition he may have an advantage over both, certainly over the latter greatly; nor is he at all comparable to Gibbon, whose manner, which many have censured, I think admirably suited to the work. In the decline and fall of the Roman Empire there is too much to sadden and disgust: a smile in such a narrative on some occasions is far from unacceptable: if it should be succeded by a sneer, it is not the sneer of bitterness, which falls not on debility, nor of triumph, which accords not with contempt. The colours, it is true, are gorgeous, like those of the setting sun; and such were wanted. The style is much swayed by the sentiment: would that which is proper for the historian of Fabius and Scipio, of Hannibal and Pyrrhus, be proper too for Augustulus and the popes? Gibbon could be grave when an emperor like Julian commanded it; but could he, or could any one, on rising from the narration of a Greek historian, who has described how an empress played "the royal game of goose?"

DELILLE.

Gibbon, one would imagine, was a mixt production of two different races in Africa, and borrowed the moral features from the one, the physical from the other. The Kabobiguas have no worship, sacrifice, ceremonies, or priests; and the Housouanas have a nose which projects little more than five or six lines; half the face seems to be forehead.

LANDOR.

When Voltaire calls the French poetry strong and energetic, he shews himself insensible that the nature both of the language and of the metre prohibits it: when he calls the Italian weak and effeminate and unfit for action, he overlooks his inconsistency in remarking that "we respect Homer but read Tasso." In his criticisms on poetry, I confess to you that, if you will allow me to deliver my opinion in the words of Chaucer,

He hath a voice as weak as hath a *gote*.

No continental poet is less weak and effeminate than Chiabrera; whose works, I apprehend, Voltaire was just as incapable of appreciating as Homer's. Did he ever hear of Filicaja? rich in thought as Pindar himself, and more enthusiastic.

DELILLE.

Enthusiastic as Pindar! ah M. Landor!

LANDOR.

Abbé, I said *more* enthusiastic: for in criticism I love correctness. We have lost the greater and perhaps the better part of Pindar's poetry: what remains is more distinguished for exquisite taste, than for enthusiasm. There is a grandeur of soul which never leaves him, even in domestic scenes. His genius does not rise on points or peaks of sublimity, but pervades all things with a vigorous and easy motion, such as the poets attribute to the herald of the Gods. He is remarkable for the rich economy of his ideas and the temperate austerity of his judgment: he never says more than what is proper, nor otherwise than what is best.

I remember an observation of yours, that "*the dithyrambic is almost entirely lost to the moderns, whose language is still less adapted to it than the latin**." On the contrary, *all* the modern languages, with the sole exception of yours, are much better adapted to the dithyrambic than the latin.

The baron *de Couture*, in his notes on Lucre-

* "Se *prête* moins à la sublimité de l'enthousiasme."

tius, is enamoured of his native tongue, altho less desperately than Henri Etienne, who calls it *the best of all tongues possible*.. not existing or extinct, but within the gift of the Divinity. The more judicious lover thus expresses his admiration: "If it were permitted me, without offending any one, to say a few words to the advantage of our language, it appears to me that we may find in it all the ease, the polish, and the majesty of the roman. To reproach it with its poverty is an outrage. Do not let us cast upon it our own defects: the sterility is in our thoughts. If we do but think, our language will furnish us with expressions. Perhaps I may be a little too partial to it."

DELILLE.

Not at all! not at all!

LANDOR.

He procedes in acknowledging that he may be rather so in placing it with the latin, to which, beyond all other of its excellences, it is unquestionably the rival in poetry. His next observation is, that, if the Romans had not only the constraint of measure, but also of rhyme, to vanquish, he doubts whether it ever would attain the charm of french poetry.

DELILLE.

Very reasonably: I doubt it too: or rather, I am certain it would not.

LANDOR.

If an organ were forced to imitate a ring of bells, I doubt whether the ring of bells would not succede the best. He might have added, if the Romans had been obliged to split their heroic verses down the back like broiled mackarel, he doubts whether they would have been better than the french. But your language has a greater quantity of inharmonious sounds, and a smaller of distinct words that rhyme, than any other that employs them. Let a German, a Swede, a Russian, read to you a few pages of his poetry, and this will be evident. Talma, in remarking that a French actor has difficulties to surmount which an English has not, began with pointing out the necessity he lies under of breaking the joints and claws of every verse, as of pigeons for a pie, and of pronouncing it as if it were none at all.. thus undoing what the writer had taken the greater part of his pains to accomplish.

The business of this art is to chasten and elevate the mind by exciting and regulating the better passions, and to impress on it lessons of terror and of pity, by exhibiting the self-chastise-

ment of the worse. There should be as much of passion as is possible, with as much of reason as is compatible with it. How admirable is the union of these in the ode of Filicaja to Sobieski!

DELILLE.

Do you really then preferr this Italian to Boileau? his ode to the king is fine.

LANDOR.

There is almost as much difference between his ode and the Italian, as between Sobieski and Louis; almost as much as between the liberation of Europe and the conflagration of the Palatinate. Give me the volume, if that in your hand is it.

The *high* wisdom of a *young* hero is not the *tardy* fruit of *slow old* age.

Dear Abbé, can you ever have read this commencement, and call the author a man of genius or taste?

. . . Ma muse tremblante
Fuit d'un si *grand fardeau* la charge *trop pesante*.

Vulgarity in the metaphor and redundance in the expression; and look! it occurs again at the conclusion. Addison tells you that he does, what he gives no signs of doing, that he

Bridles in his struggling Muse with pain.

But it is better to turn a Muse into a mare than

into a mule or ass; and Addison has redeemed the wretchedness of his poetry by the suavity and humour of his prose.

> Et tandis que ton bras des peuples *redouté*
> Va le foudre à la main retablir l'equité.

I always fancied that the *foudre* is rather a destroyer than an establisher. By why was the arm of Louis feared by the nations, if it was armed only to establish equity? The *arm* with the thunderbolt in the *hand* is worse than tautology.

Let us turn to his Satires.

SATIRE I.

> Et puis, comment percer *cette foule effroyable*
> De rimeurs affamés ... *dont le nombre l'accable* ...
> Un lit et deux placets composoient tout son bien;
> Ou, pour en mieux parler, Saint-Amant n'avoit rien.

It would puzzle me to divine in what this *mieux parler* consists. There never was a verse more perfectly idle than this better-spoken one, or what would incurr more ridicule in any notoriously bad writer. The bed and the *deux placets* shew the extremes of Saint-Amant's poverty, without any expenditure of wit or fancy to light up the chamber: any other piece of worthless furniture might have been added. This however did not suit the Rhyme, Boileau's goddess of Necessity. He there-

fore ridicules the man for not having what he had just before ridiculed him for having.

SATIRE II.

Pour qui tient Apollon tous ses trésors ouverts,
Et qui sçais à quel coin se marquent les bons vers.

Behold the art of sinking! Moliere goes into Apollo's treasury, and finds out in it how he marks his cravat.

SATIRE III.

Nothing can be more flat and out of character than the last lines, from a person who professes just before an utter indifference to the pleasures of the table.

SATIRE IV.

Tout hérissé de grec, tout bouffi d'arrogance.

All this, excepting the last word, is in another place. The idea of *hérissé de grec* arose, I presume, from the sharp and slender forms of the Greek letters, as we see them printed. A line of Greek appeared to Boileau like a hedge of aloes.

La même erreur les fait errer diversement.

A contradiction the more apparent, as he had mentioned the *hundred* roads in which the travelers wandered, some to the right, some to the

left. He has ridiculed the errors into which men have run from the imperfection of their reason: a great folly! he now gravely rails at reason itself: a greater!

Que si d'un sort facheux la maligne inconstance.

The inconstancy of a *sort facheux* was never before complained of, still less called *malignant*.

Enfin un médecin fort expert en son art
Le guérit... par adresse ou plutôt par hazard.

It is quite unimportant to the story, if not so to the verse, whether the physician cured the man by skill or chance; but to say that he was *fort expert en son art*, and subjoin that he effected his cure *plutôt par hazard*, proves that the poet must have taken his expressions altogether at hazard.

SATIRE V.

On fait cas d'un coursier qui, fier.. et plein de cœur..

does what?

Fait paroître en courant sa bouillante vigueur.

This is natural enough: and could not well be otherwise: but what think you of a horse that *jamais ne se lasse?* Do not be surprised: he becomes just like another, and

dans la carrière
S'est couvert *mille fois*... d'une *noble* poussière.

SATIRE VI.

A man who reasons, must be aware how silly it is to write an angry satire on *cats:* yet the first thing that provokes the complaints of Boileau against Paris, is the noise of these animals, and their dangerous conspiracies, in league with the rats, against his repose. Such a confederation is about as rational and natural, and must end in the same manner, as the alliance of the crowned crimps against your country, in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity. He then calls this disturbance the least of his misfortunes, and attacks the cocks, who, of course, are a plague peculiar to Paris. Yet neither the cocks nor the blacksmith, who falls next under his displeasure, are, if we may judge from the outcry he makes, so grievous an evil to him, as the former licentious disturbers of his peace.

Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent de la ville.
Le bois *le plus funeste* et le moins fréquenté
Est, au prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté.

Exaggeration may be carried to any highth where there is wit, but rolls down like a load of gravel where there is none.

Malheur donc à celui qu'une affaire imprévue
Engage un peu trop tard au détour d'une rue!

He does not seem aware that all the praises he has been lavishing on Louis are worth nothing, if there is the slightest foundation for this complaint. Thieves are not subjects for satire; but those are truly so whose capitals are crowded with them.

Il faudroit, dans l'enclos d'un vaste logement,
Avoir loin de la rue un autre appartement.

Thus is curious: for it demonstrates to us that there certainly must have been a time, when it was considered or offered, as wit, satire, or moral.

SATIRE VII.

Mais tout fat me deplait... et me blesse les yeux;
Je le poursuis partout.

This is idle and silly; if it were practicable, it would be the ruin of Satire.

DELILLE.

Turn over, and you will find Boileau warmed by the fine French sentiment of loyalty to his king. Ay, that pleases you, I see.

LANDOR.

No sentiment is more just or reasonable than loyalty; but it should belong as much to kings as to their people: where it is not reciprocal it is worth nothing. What insincerity! what baseness! to rave against the wild ambition of Alexander, who had all the spirit and all the talents of a con-

summate warrior, and to crouch at the feet of Louis with every expression of homage and admiration; of Louis, who had no such talents, no such spirit, who exposed his person in no battle, but who ordered a massacre to win the favour of a saint, and consumed a province to cure a heresy: a coward, a bigot, perfidious, ungrateful, perjured, sacrilegious, who died so despised and hated, that his worshipers jumped up from their kneeling, and pelted his carcase with mire and ordure as it went to burial.

DELILLE.

Ah, M. Landor, you cannot do him justice. You must exaggerate. He is the Grand Monarque.

LANDOR.

This satire is borrowed in many parts from Horace, in many from Juvenal; yet Boileau has contrived to sink all the gaiety of the one, and to weaken with cold and hoarseness all the declamation of the other.

SATIRE IX.

C'est à vous, mon Esprit, à qui je veux parler.

It is a pity that his *Esprit* was not summoned to this conference earlier; but even now it is only called to be talked to, and has more to hear than to say.

Mais moi qui, *dans le fond*, sçais bien ce....

Significant nod, to give the sentence the appearance of wit, which, if it lies anywhere in it, lies *dans le fond.*

Phebus a-t-il pour vous applani le Parnasse ?

The word *applani* is not a very happy one. The difficulties of Parnassus are the triumphs of the poet. I must observe here, that Apollo, Parnassus, &c. are too frequently used by your poets, and that nothing shews a barrenness of invention more evidently, than this perpetual recurrence to mythology on subjects unconnected with it. I know but one thing so subversive of illusion in works of fiction.

DELILLE.

What is that ?

LANDOR.

The *cant-word* of novelists, *our hero ;* by which you meet the author face to face inopportunely, and the vision is intercepted by him bodily. The *hero* whom he presents to us, is perhaps a young gentleman fresh from college, whose feats of heroism have been upon a Wilton carpet, or in a pleasant walk among the trees with Emily, or in an innocent ride between two turnpike-gates. It closes with falling in love, with struggling to get

out of it, with succeding by the Leucadian leap of marriage, or in case of failure, as may happen, with blessing her devoutly *on his last legs*, as we say in England. But again to an author who never was in this predicament, and who certainly leads us not into temptation of any kind.

Et ne sçavez-vous pas que, sur ce mont sacré,
Qui ne vole au sommet tombe au plus bas degré.

This is neither true nor ingenious. Horace has misled him by being misunderstood, where he says

... mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non dî, non concessere columnæ.

Now Horace himself, and Catullus, and Tibullus, have never reached nor attempted to reach the summit of Parnassus; and equally certain is it that they have not fallen *au plus bas degré*. Their poetry is excellent in its kind; so is that of La Fontaine. It is only those whose poetry has risen no higher than to mediocrity in its kind, whatever that kind may be, whose existence as poets is destined to a short duration. Catullus and Horace will be read as long as Homer and Virgil, and more often and by more readers.

Par l'*eclat d'un fardeau* trop pesant à porter.

This is the third time, within a few pages, that

I have observed the metaphor; but I never heard until now that a *fardeau* could have an *eclat*. If it ever is attended by one, it must be, not while it is borne, but at the moment when it is thrown off.

Peindre Bellone *en feu*, tonnant de toutes parts...

And what else? Mars, Minerva, Jupiter, the Fates, the Furies!

Et le Belge effrayé...

but surely in some act of awful devotion... that, if we fall from such a highth, it may be into the bosom of Pity. Ah no!

... fuyant sur ses remparts.

How contemptible are these verses on Bellona and the Dutchman, in comparison with those they are intended to imitate!

Cupidum, pater optime, vires
Deficiunt: neque enim quivis horrenti pilis
Agmina, nec fractâ pereuntes cuspide Gallos,
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Parthi.

DELILLE.

This satire contains the line which has been so often quoted,

Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile,

in which Boileau has scarcely shewn all his wonted discrimination. Surely Tasso is a superb poet.

LANDOR.

A few remarks on that foolish verse. Your poets have always felt a violent jealousy of the Italian. If Virgil had lived in the age of Tasso, and Tasso in the age of Virgil, Boileau would have transferred and commuted the designations, and have given the tinsel to Virgil, the gold to Tasso. There is little of tinsel in the Gerusalemme, and much of gold. The poet fails whenever he attempts the sublime, generally so called; but he seldom overloads his descriptions with idle words or frivolous decorations. His characters are more vivid and more distinct than Virgil's, and greatly more interesting. The heroes of the Eneid are like the half-extinct frescoes of Raphael; but what is wanting in the frescoes of the painter is effaced by time, what is wanting in the figures of the poet was wanting to his genius. No man ever formed in his mind an idea of Dido, or perhaps ever wished to form it; particularly on finding her memory so extensive and her years so mature, that she could recollect the arrival of Teucer at Sidon. Mezentius is called a despiser of the Gods; yet the most pious speech in the Eneid comes from the lips of Mezentius, the most heroical

of all the characters in that poem, and the most resigned to the will of heaven:

Ast de me divôm pater atque hominum rex
Viderit.

But who would walk among the delightful scenery of woods and waterfalls, of glades and forests, of vallies in their retirement, and of cornfields in their richness and profusion, for the sake of bringing home a few dry sticks and stubble? or who could receive more pleasure from such an occupation, than from surveying the majestic growth of the trees and the rich variety of the foliage?

DELILLE.

I would rather walk through a garden, listening to a fountain, culling roses or sprigs of jessamine, and meditating upon beautiful Nature. But I am very happy that you admire Tasso. I never could determine, whether he or Virgil had the most grace and the most elegance, and have often wondered that the same country should have produced, even with the interval of fifteen centuries, two poets almost equal to our Racine.

LANDOR.

Virgil has blemishes like Tasso, and Tasso has beauties like Virgil. The Eneid, I venture to affirm, is the most mis-shapen of epics; an epic of episodes: for these constitute the greater and

better part. The Gerusalemme Liberata is, of all such compositions, the most perfect in its plan. In regard to execution, read any one book attentively, and I am persuaded, M. l'Abbé, that you would rather have written it than all the poetry of Voltaire and Boileau ; if indeed there is any thing in either of them that could augment your reputation.

Let us go on with the volume before us.

> de sang-froid . . . et sans être amoureux,
> Pour quelque Iris en l'air faire le langoureux.

The superfluous on the superfluous! Boileau is one of the *forty* who have done the very thing. One would imagine that there had lived in Paris some lady of this name, either by baptism or convention, celebrated as was Phryne. The French poets, if they wished to interest the reader, should at least have engaged a name less hacknied. Delia, Corinna, Lesbia, bring with them great recollections: they are names not taken in vain by all the Romans, in the days of Roman glory. The women to whom they were first given were not ideal. Synonymous with beauty, grace, fondness, tenderness, they delight the memory by locality. We turn with indifference or with disgust from the common *Palais-Royal* face of Iris. Boileau

might have said to a patron, *you shall be my Apollo, my Richelieu, my Louis:* the expression has something to rest upon; and why should not love enjoy the same privileges as patronage?

> La Satire, en leçons, en nouveautés fertile,
> Sait seule assaisonner le plaisant et l'utile.

Rhyme consists in similarity of sound, not in identity: an observation that has escaped all your poets, and, what is more wonderful, all the Italian. Satire is less fertile in novelty than any other kind of poetry; and possesses not *alone* the power attributed to it, but, on the contrary, in a less degree than the rest. If it alone were endowed with this faculty, why should poets employ any kind else? Who would write what cannot be pleasant? who what cannot be useful? Satire alone would serve all the purposes both of poetry and of prose; and we might expect to find a good satire in every good treatise on geometry, or metaphysics, or music, or cookery.

> Hé! mon dieu! craignez tout d'un auteur en courroux,
> Qui peut... Quoi?... Je m'entends... Mais encor?...
> Taisez vous.

Thus ends this long monologue between Boileau and his *Esprit*, which must have rejoiced heartily at its dismissal. Perhaps no line is more suitable

to the general French taste than this last... so many short sentences, coming out singly and with breaks between them, like the notes in a cock's morning hymn, which, allow me to observe, seems to have been taken by your countrymen as a model for their verse, not omitting even the interjectional scream with which it closes;... so many things of which almost every man fancies that he alone is in the secret. I must confess, it is really one to me; and, after all the interpretations it will bear, I find neither wit nor satire in it, nor even the sting of a dead epigram.

DELILLE.

When you compare the tenth satire of Boileau with the manner in which women are attacked by Juvenal, you must be filled with admiration at perceiving how superior French morality is to Roman.

LANDOR.

That is a knotty question, M. l'Abbé: we might bruise our hands, if we attempted to lay hold of it. It is safer to confine our observations to poetry.

Que, si sous Adam même... et *loin avant Noé.*

The same fault incessantly recurring! What was under Adam, was long before Noah. Your

marquisses were not very profound in chronology: but even the most ignorant of them probably knew this fact; notwithstanding the league between his confessor and his vices to keep him from reading the book where it is recorded. In Boileau there is really more of diffuseness than of brevity: few observe this, because he abounds in short sentences: and few are aware that sentences may be very short and the writer very prolix; as half a dozen stones rising out of a brook give the passenger more trouble than a plank across it.

Villon et Saint-Gelais,
Arioste, Marot, Bocace, Rabelais.

One of the beauties at which Boileau aimed, was the nitching of several names together in a verse, without any other word. Caligula spoke justly and admirably, when he compared the sentences of Seneca to sand without lime. Montesquieu, Voltaire, and their imitators, Frederick of Prussia and Catharine of Russia, were perhaps not aware how perversely they imitated this blameable model of style, and how far they were in general from his gravity and acuteness. Florus and Valerius Maximus seem chiefly to have captivated the attention and to have formed the

manner of Voltaire *; as the style of our historian Hume is evidently taken from a French translation of Machiavelli.

Seul avec des valets, souvent voleurs et traîtres,
Et toujours, a coup sûr, ennemis de leurs maîtres.

Why so? in any other respect than as *voleurs et traîtres.*

Et, pour le rendre libre, il le faut enchâiner.

This verse alone was worth a pension from Louis. It is the most violent antithesis that ever was constructed: but, as a maxim in politics, it is admirably adapted to your nation, most happy under a despot and most faithful under an usurper.

Et ne presume pas que Vénus ou Satan, &c.

The two mythologies ought never to be confounded. This is worse than Bellona and the Dutchman, or than Mars *et le fameux fort de Skink.*

L'honneur est comme une île escarpée et sans bords:
On n'y peut plus rentrer dès qu'on en est dehors.

* Montesquieu, of whom Voltaire was among the earliest and best imitators, was a great admirer of Florus. The cardinal Duperon placed him next to Tacitus, and above *Tite-Live.*

The simily is imperfect because the fact is untrue. If an island can be entered once, it can be entered twice.

Avec un air plus sombre
S'en aller mediter une vole au jeu d'hombre.

There is no reason, except the rhyme, for this *air plus sombre*. When the lady only *thinks* of playing, she has encountered no ill success, and expects none; otherwise she would not play.

Comme ce magistrat de hideuse mémoire...

The story of this magistrate is badly told: the progress of his passion is untraced. How much superior is the Sir Balaam of Pope.

Mais qui pourroit compter le nombre des haillons?

This picture is much overcharged. It appears to me that the author had written two descriptions, and, not wishing to lose either, nor knowing what to do with both, tacked them together to compose the tenth satire. He confesses that le récit passe un peu l'*ordinaire*, and desires to know whether it could be given in fewer words. Horace may shew that it can be given both in fewer and better.

Mais qui la priveroit huit jours *de ses plaisirs*,
Et qui, loin d'un galant... objet *de ses désirs*.

It is natural enough that the lady's gallant should be the object of her desires: but what shall we think of a versification which permits *de ses plaisirs* to be followed by *de ses désirs?*

Sa tranquille vertu conserve tous ses crimes.

A violent counterpoint! Antithesis was always fond of making inroads on the borders of absurdity.

SATIRE XII.

Et partout sa doctrine en peu de tems portée...

what can be added to its extent if it was partout? why

Fut du Gange, du Nil, et du Tage écoutée.

Another falling off! Who in the world ever made a voyage to the Ganges for the purpose of arriving at the Tagus? The verse itself did not exact this penance. It could have been written as easily,

Fut du Tage, du Nil, et du Gange écoutée.

This would have described, as it was intended, the progress of the Christian faith. I know not where, in any language, to find such lethargic verses as the following:

Sans simonie on peût contre un bien temporel
Hardiment échanger un bien spirituel.

Of all the wretched poets ridiculed by Boileau, not one, I believe, has written any thing so signally stupid. Turn to the Discours au Roi.

> Je vais de toutes parts *ou me guide ma veine,*
> *Sans tenir en marchant une route certaine ;*
> Et, sans gêner ma plume en ce libre métier,
> Je la laisse au hazard courir sur le papier.

This is untrue: if it were not, he would have written greatly worse than he did. Horace has misled him here, as on other occasions, by being misunderstood: he says,

> Ego apis Matinæ
> More modoque
> Grata carpentis thyma *per laborem*
> *Plurimum, &c.*

This relates to the diversity of subjects chosen by the lyric poet: instead of which Boileau speaks merely of satires, and tells us that he corrects the age at hazard, and without the view or intention of correcting it.

> Quand je vois ta sagesse en ses justes projets
> D'une heureuse abondance enrichir tes sujets.

Here indeed he is a satirist, and a very bold one, and one who does not let his pen run at random over the paper.

> Que je n'ai *ni le ton, ni la voix* assez forte.

This verse resembles that in his translation of Sappho:

Je ne sçaurois trouver . . . de langue . . . ni de voix.

He places the tone and the voice in contradistinction: but what is the difference? Where the tone is loud, the voice is loud, at least for the time. Here, as everywhere, you find the never-failing characteristic of your verse. Your heroic line rises and falls at a certain pitch, like the handle of a pump.

DELILLE.

And yet our heroic verse is more generally redd and applauded in Europe than the English.

LANDOR.

Or than the Italian, or than the latin, or than the greek. Admiration is no proof of excellence: the point it comes from is its indication, and this point is one and narrow. It must procede out of reason: how few look for that! how few of those who look for it can find it in these regions. Where is the demonstration? who is the demonstrator?

EPITRE I. AU ROI.

Boileau had just issued a long and laborious writ against *Equivoque;* he had despatched against it Noah's ark by sea and Heresy by land, when Apollo *éperdu* makes him suddenly the prize of

his adversary. He has the simplicity to tell Louis that Apollo has cautioned him thus:

Cette mer où tu cours est célèbre en naufrages.

I hope Louis read this line some years afterwards, when the application of it would scourge him severely. Deprived of all he had acquired by his treachery and violence, unless the nation that brought him upon his knees, had permitted two traitors, Harley and St. John, to second the views of a weak woman and to obstruct those of policy and of England, he had been carted to condign punishment in the *Place de Grêve* or at Tyburn. Such examples are much wanted, and, as they can rarely be given, should never be omitted.

This man is here called *grand roi* seven times within 200 lines; and to shew that he really was so, the words are written in grand characters.

Te livrer le Bosphore, et... d'un vers incivil
Proposer au Sultan de te céder le Nil.

Can any one doubt that, if the letter *e* could have been added to *vers*, the poet would have written *civil* instead of *incivil*. I do not remember in any language an epithet so idle and improper.

Ne t'avons-nous pas *vu* dans les plaines Belgiques,
Quand l'ennemi vain*cu*, désertant ses remparts,
Au devant de ton joug couroit de toutes parts,
Toi-même te borner?

Yes, with the assistence of William. Your poets and writers of every kind make all the world French. It has been well remarked, that a Frenchman when victorious is most truly called *vain-cœur*, and that yours is the only nation upon earth which, after a defeat, still retains this characteristic quality, tho transferring it to the part it exposes to the enemy, and to specify which more particularly would not be decorous *.

Au devant de ton joug.

Surely a beneficent prince has no occasion to impose a yoke upon those who run toward him so willingly from all parts: nevertheless the sentiment is national.

Iront de ta valeur *effrayer l'univers*...

A wise, beneficent, godlike action! but what follows?

Et camper devant Dôle au milieu des hyvers!!!

He grows more and more reasonable.

* The preceding sentence was added by the friend who revised the proof sheets of my Conversations; and who also inserted the speeches of Delille in pp. 389, 391, and 394, together with the sentence at the top of that page.

On verra les abus par ta main réformés,
La licence et l'orgueil en tous lieux réprimés,
Du débris des traitans ton épargne grossie,
Des subsides *affreux* la rigueur adoucie,
Le soldat, dans la paix, sage et... *laborieux*,
Nos artisans grossiers rendus... *industrieux*.

What idea must that nation entertain of poetry, which can call this so? To encounter these wretched lines, truly

C'est camper devant Dôle au milieu des hyvers.

What more does Louis perform?

Tantôt je tracerai tes *pompeux* bâtiments,
Du loisir d'un héros *nobles* amusements.

These noble amusements, with some others of the same hero, brought France into a state of poverty and wretchedness, which, neglected by his successors, hurled the least vicious of the family to the scaffold.

DELILLE.

I am afraid you will censure some of my finest verses, such as,

Eh! qui du sommet d'un coteau
Voyant le Nil au loin rouler ses eaux *pompeuses*,
Detourneroit les yeux de ce *riche tableau*
Et de ces eaux majestueuses?

or,

Tel le *vaste* Apennin de sa cime *hautaine*:

or even this,

Ah, si ce *noble* instinct par qui le *grand* Homère...

LANDOR.

Fine verses are often bad poetry. If these are really yours, they are your very worst.

DELILLE.

My friends think otherwise.

LANDOR.

Then they do you injustice. Never take their opinion in future unless upon an eel-pie.

EPITRE III.

I turn over the leaves hastily... Here we shall discover what happened when Adam was fallen.

Le chardon importun hérissa... les guérets,
Le serpent *venimeux* rampa dans... les fôrets.

According to this, matters were bettered. If the serpent had always been there, Adam would have lost nothing, and the importunity of the thistle would have been little to be complained of, if it had only been in the *guérets*.

EPITRE IV. AU ROI.

Comment en vers heureux assiéger Doësbourg,
Zutphen, Wagheninghen, Harderwic, Knotzembourg?

These names are tacked together for no other purpose than the rhyme: he complains that they are difficult to pronounce, meaning to say difficult

to spell; for certainly none of them is very harsh; but whenever a Frenchman finds a difficulty in spelling a word, he throws in a handful of consonants to help him over: these are the fascines of M. Boileau's approaches. The sound of *Wurts* is not offensive to the ear, without which, the poet says,

Que j'allois à tes yeux étaler de merveilles!

As you French pronounce *Zutphen*, &c, they are truly harsh enough; but that is owing to your nasal twang, the most disagreeable and disgusting of all sounds, being produced by the same means as a stink is rejected, and thus reminding us of one. The syllable *Zut* is not harsher than the first in *Zethes*, or *Phen* than the first in *Phenix*. In fact the sounds of *Grand Roi* are considerably harsher than any that so powerfully offend him, as to stop him with his *raryshew* on his back, when he had promised the king a peep at it. I well remember the difficulty I experienced, in teaching a learned countryman of yours that,

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won...

is really a verse, and that *'twas* should not be pronounced *it was*, inviting him to read the first line of the Iliad, in which he stumbled at *thea*, and fell flat upon his face at *Pcleiadeo*. I will now shew

you what to any organs sensible of harmony is really disagreeable; three similar sounds for instance in one verse, which occurr in the four last of this Epistle, that seems to have been written when the din of the blacksmith's shop, before complained of, was ringing in his ears.

Non, non, ne fais*ons* plus de plaintes inutiles:
Puisqu' ainsi *dans* deux mois tu pr*ends* quar*ante* villes,
Assuré des *bons* vers *dont ton* bras me re*pond*,
Je t'at*tends dans* deux *ans* aux bords de l'Helle*spont*.

I know nothing of the Dutch language: but I will venture a wager with you, M. l'Abbé, that the harshest verse in it is less so than these; and a Greek or an Italian shall decide. There are dozens similar.

Je vais *faire* la *guerre* aux habitans de l'*air*.
Il me *faut* du re*pos*, des pr*és* et des for*êts*.
Ont *cru* me rendre affr*eux* aux *yeux* de l'univers.
Ses ecrits pleins de *feu* partout brillent aux *yeux*.

The man must have been born in a sawmill, or in France, or under the falls of Niagara, whose ear can suffer these. In the same Epistle we find,

A ces mots, essuyant sa barbe *limoneuse*,
Il prend d'un vieux guerrier la figure *poudreuse*.

Another *equivoque!* Surely if Boileau had found such poetry in an author of small repute, he

would have quoted it as a thing too low to kick up, too flat to ridicule.

What does the Rhine, after wiping the mud off his moustaches with a clean cambric hankerchief, and assuming the powdered face of an old warrior? he

Du *fameux* fort de Skink prend la route *connue!*

And Louis, what is he about?

Louis, les animant du feu de son courage,
Se plaint de sa grandeur... qui l'attache au rivage.

He had many such complaints to make against his grandeur: Cesar and Alexander had none. A Gascon ran away from a fortress about to be bombarded. He was intercepted and brought back; and, on his trial before a court-martial, said in his defence that he had wished to shew his courage in the plain. If this had been permitted, it would probably have been found to be of the same kind as that of Louis.

Turn to the eighth Epistle, which is again addressed to the King. I pass over the intermediate, because it is reasonable to presume that if Boileau looks not well in a court-dress, he never looks well. In other cases indeed it would be unjust to confound the poet with the courtier: in him the courtier is the better part. I observe too that these

Epistles are particularly celebrated by the Editor for " the suppleness and grace of the versification, and for the equableness, solidity, and fulness of the style."

Et mes vers en ce style, ennuyeux, sans appas,
Deshonorent ma plume et ne t' honorent pas.

If the verses were *ennuyeux et sans appas*, it is evident enough that they dishonoured his pen; and what dishonoured his pen could not honour his prince. This thought, which Boileau has repeated so often, and so ill, is better expressed by several other of your poets, and shortly before by Malleville, in these words :

Mais je sçais quel effort demande cet ouvrage;
La grandeur du sujet me doit épouvanter;
Je trahirois sa gloire au lieu de l'augmenter,
Et ferois à son nom moins d'honneur que d'outrage.

DELILLE.

That sonnet of Malleville is very beautiful.

LANDOR.

Particularly in the conclusion : yet your critics preferred, to this and all others, one which displays Phillis and Aurora and Zephyr and Olympus, and in which a most polite apology is offered to the Sun, for the assertion that the brightness of Phillis was as much superior to his, as his was

superior to that of the stars. They, who reason so profoundly on all things, seem to argue thus: if it requires more skill in a tailor to give a fashionable cut and fresh glossiness to an old court-dress, than to make a new one, it requires a better poet to refurbish a trite thought than to exhibit an original.

Dans les *nobles douceurs* d'un sejour *plein de charmes*
Tu n'es pas moins heros qu'au milieu des alarmes.

In the second line, another equivoque! It is perfectly true that he was just as much a hero abed and asleep as in battle; but his heroism was chiefly displayed in these *nobles douceurs*. Pity that Boileau has written no ode on his marriage with a poor peasant girl, whom he met while he was hunting. The Virgin Mary would perhaps have been bridemaid, and Apollo would have presented the Gospel on which he swore. How many of your most glorious kings would, if they had been private men in any free country, have been condemned to the pillory and the gallies!

De ton trône agrandi portant seul tout le faix.

This is the favorite metaphor of your poet: he ought to have known that kings do not carry the burden of thrones, but that thrones carry theirs, and that therefor the metaphor here is not only

inelegant, as usual, but imperfect and misapplied.

J'amasse de tes faits le pénible volume.

Again equivoque!... In turning over the leaves to arrive at the Art Poetique, my eye rests on this verse in the twelfth Epistle:

Qui n'eut jamais pour dieu que glâce...

A strange God enough! it is not to be wondered at if there is no other in his company: but there is: who?

..... et que froideur.

There are follies on which it would be a greater folly to remark. Who would have the courage to ask whether there is not coldness where there is ice? A Latin poet however has written almost as ill:

Alpes
Frigidus aerias atque *alta cacumina.*

Read the first lines in the Art Poetique.

C'est en vain qu'au Parnasse un *téméraire auteur*
Pense de l'art des vers atteindre la *hauteur*...

Auteur answers to *hauteur*. After this fashion an echo is the most accomplished of rhymers.

S'il ne sent point du ciel l'influence secrète.

In that case he is not *temeraire*, and the epithet is worse than useless.

> Fuyez de ces auteurs l'abondance sterile,
> Et ne vous chargez point d'un detail inutile.

The first verse forestals the second, which is flat; and the three following are still worse.

> Ou le Temps qui s'enfuit... *une horloge à la main.*

He thinks it unreasonable that such an allegory should be censured. Now Time should be represented with no very modern inventions to designate him. I presume that M. Boileau means the *hourglass* by his *horloge* à la main; but altho we often see in prints an allegorical figure of this description, no poet should think that a sufficient reason for adopting it, but rather (if a better were wanting) for its rejection. An *hourglass*, in the hand of this mighty and most awful Power, is hardly less ridiculous than a watch and seals.

> Soyez vif et pressé dans vos narrations,
> Soyez riche et *pompeux* dans vos descriptions.

I know not which to call the worse, the lines or the advice. But to recommend a man to be *rich* in any thing, is a hint that cannot always be taken, as we poets know better than most men.

> J'aime mieux Arioste et ses fables comiques
> Que ces auteurs toujours froids et melancholiques.

Really! This he intends as a *pis-aller*. Ariosto is a plagiary, the most so of all poets; Ariosto is negligent; his plan inartificial, defective, bad: but divide the Orlando into three parts, and take the worst of them, and altho it may contain a large portion of extremely vile poetry, it will contain more of good than the whole French language. M. de Voltaire, like M. Boileau, spoke flippantly and foolishly of Ariosto. He afterwards gave his reasons for having done so.

DELILLE.

I do not remember them at present. Were they at all satisfactory, or at least ingenious?

LANDOR.

They were very good ones indeed, and exactly such as might have been expected from a critic of his spirit and quickness.

DELILLE.

Do you recollect the sum of them?

LANDOR.

He had never redd him! To make amends, he afterwards took him kindly by the hand, and preferred him to Dante.

DELILLE.

He might have held back there. But where we have dirted one shoe we may dirt the other: it does not cost a farthing more to clean a pair than an odd one. When, however, not contented with

making the grasshopper so loud as to deafen the vales and mountains, Ariosto makes her deafen too the sea and heavens, he says rather too much on this worst pest of Italy, this neutralizer of the nightingale.

Cicala col noioso metro
Fra i densi rami del fronzuto stelo
Le valli e i monti *assorda*, e'l mar e'l cielo.

LANDOR.

If he rises too high in this quarter, he fals in another too low, and from an *eminence*. He speaks of cardinal Ippolito di Este,

magnanimo, sublime...
Gran cardinal della chiesa di Roma!!

I am sorry, since I love Ariosto next to Boccaccio, at the discovery we have made together, that the two greatest personages in his *Orlando* are a cardinal and a grasshopper. But come along: we must go further, and may fare worse.

Mais aussi pardonnez, si, plein de ce beau zele,
De tous vos pas *fameux* observateur fidele,
Quelques fois du bon or je separe le faux.

What has *gold* to do, false or sterling, with *steps, zeal, and observation?* And does he mean to say that there is *false gold* in the *steps* of king

Louis? This is surely what the *faithful observer* would not wish to render *famous*, in the midst of a panegyric. *Fameux*, I must remark, is a very favorite expression with him, and is a very unpoetical one. Poetry is the voice of Fame, and celebrates, not what is famous, but what deserves to be so. Of this Boileau is ignorant. He uses the same epithet at the beginning of the Lutrin.

> Et toi, *fameux* heros, dont la sage entremise
> De ce schisme naissant débarrassa l'Eglise,
> Viens d'un regard heureux *animer mon projet*,
> Et garde-toi de rire en si grave sujet.

The last advice destroys all facetiousness; to *animate a project* is nonsense.

> Et de longs traits de *feu* lui sortent par les *yeux*.

This is just as euphonious as the verse,

> Ses ecrits pleins de *feu* partout brillent aux *yeux*.

Another such is,

> De ses ailes dans l'*air* secouant la pous*siere*.

Another no less so,

> ... Invisible en ce *lieu*
> Je ne pourrai donc plus être vu que de *Dieu*.

And another,

Là Xenophon dans l'*air* heurte contre un *La Serre*.

In the translation of Sappho's ode, all is wretchedly bad after the first stanza.

Je sens *de veine en veine* une subtile flamme
Courir *par tout mon corps.*
Je ne *sçaurois trouver* de *langue*... ni de *voix.*
Un *nu*age con*fus* se repand sur ma *vûe.*
Je n'entends *plus*..je tombe en de douces langueurs..

He had talked about *doux* transports two lines above.

Et pale, sans haleine, *interdite, éperdue*...

This is the very contrary to the manner of Sappho, as praised by Longinus, and nothing can be more diffuse, more tautological, more prosaic.

You must have remarked, M. l'Abbé, that I have frequently turned over several pages together, and that, *familiar*, as you may call me, of the *Holy Office*, I never have invested my meagre and hollow-eyed delinquent with colours of flame and images of devils. Ridicule has followed the vestiges of Truth, but never usurped her place. I have said nothing of the Odes, from an unwillingness to insult over their helpless fatuity. Only throw a glance over that on the taking of Namur.

Quelle *docte* et sainte ivresse
Aujourd'hui *me fait la loi?*

Violent absurdity!

Et par cent bouches *horribles*
L'airain sur ces monts *terribles.*—
Dix mille vaillant Alcides.—
C'est Jupiter en personne,
Ou c'est le vainqueur... de Mons!—
Saint-Omer, Besançon, Dole,
Ypres, Mastricht, et Cambrai!! !—
Accourez, Nassau, Baviere...

to do what?

Considerer ... ces approches!!—
Louis à tout donnant l'âme,
Marcher, courir avec eux.

He might have marched with 'em, but he ran before 'em.

Son gouverneur, *qui se trouble.*—
De corps morts, de rocs, de *briques.*

Here, I observe, the editor says, le son de ces mots repond à ce qu'ils expriment. Pray, M. l'Abbé, which is the sound among them that resembles the dead bodies?

DELILLE.

The odes of Boileau, I confess, are inferior to the chorusses of Racine in Athalie.

LANDOR.

Diffuse and feeble paraphrases from the Psalms! The best ode in your language is in the form of a sonnet by Gombaud.

La voix qui retentit, &c.

Racine has stolen many things from Euripides: he has spoilt most of them, and injured all. The beautiful lines which Lucretius had before him in his description of Iphianassa, are thus frenchified:

Fille d'Agamemnon, c'est moi qui la première
Vous appellai, Seigneur, *de ce doux nom de pere.*

This reflexion ought to come from the father, as in Lucretius, not from the daughter.

The most admired verse of Racine,

Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, &c

is borrowed almost literally from Godeau. *Cher Abner* favours the theft. The line preceding is useless, and shews, as innumerable other instances do, his custom of making the first *for* the second, and *after* it. He has profited much from the neglected poets of your country, and wants energy because he wants originality. You pause, M. l'Abbé.

DELILLE.

I cannot well believe, that if Boileau, to say nothing of Racine, was a poet so faulty as you represent him, he would have escaped the censure of such sound critics and elegant writers as Johnson and Warton.

LANDOR.

And poets also; the former so powerful that he made the tempests sigh...

O'er the sad plains perpetual tempests sigh...

the latter, that he reduced the flames to the temperature of new milk...

How *burnt* their bosoms with *warm* patriot flame!

DELILLE.

Well! what is amiss?

LANDOR.

I perceive, my dear Abbé, that you slide easily on the corruptions of our language. In fashionable life we say, "I am very *warm*," never "I am very *hot*:" the expression is wrong. Warmth is temperate heat: we never say *red-warm*, but *red-hot;* never *burning-warm*, but *burning-hot;* we use a *warming-pan* for our beds, a *heater* of red-hot iron for our tea-urns. The epithet of *warm* applied to *flame* is worse than childish: for children speak as they feel; bad poets, from reminiscences and arrangements. Johnson had no feeling for poetry: Warton was often led astray by a feverish and weak enthusiasm.

DELILLE.

Johnson may not have been quite so learned as some, whose celebrity is less; for I believe that London is worse furnished with public libraries of easy access, than any city in Europe, not excepting Constantinople; and his private one, from his contracted circumstances, must have been scanty.

LANDOR.

He was studious; but neither his weak eyes, nor many other infirmities, on which very severe mental disquietude worked incessantly, would allow him all the reading he coveted: besides he was both too poor and too wise to collect a large body of authors.

DELILLE.

Ignorant men are often more ambitious than the learned of copious libraries and curious books, as the blind are fonder of sunshine than the sighted. Surely the judgment of Johnson was correct, the style elegant.

LANDOR.

I have spoken of his judgment; it was alike in all things. In regard to elegance of style, it appears to me that a sentence of Johnson is like that article of dress which your nation has lately made peace with; divided into two parts, equal in length,

breadth, and substance, with a protuberance before and behind. Warton's Essay on Pope is a cabinet of curiosities, in which are many trifles worth looking at, nothing to carry about or use.

DELILLE.

That Racine and Boileau were great borrowers is undeniable.

LANDOR.

And equally so that they sometimes paid only a small portion of the debt.

DELILLE.

Even your immortal Shakespear borrowed from others.

LANDOR.

Yet he was more original than the originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life.

DELILLE.

I think however that I can trace Caliban, that wonderful creature, when I survey attentively the Cyclops of Euripides.

LANDOR.

He knew nothing of Euripides or his Cyclops. That poet, where he is irregular, is great; and he presents more shades and peculiarities of character, than all the other poets of antiquity put together. Yet in several scenes he appears to have written

principally for the purpose of inculcating his political and moral axioms. Almost every character introduces them, and in almost every place. There is a regular barter of verse for verse; no credit is given for a proverb, however threadbare; the exchange is paid on the nail for the commodity. The dogmas, like *valets de place*, serve any master, and run to any quarter. Even when new, they nevertheless are miserably flat and idle: how different from the striking sentences employed unsparingly by Pindar, which always come recommended by some simple and appropriate ornament, like images on days of festival in the temples. Virgil and Ovid have interspersed them throughout their works, with equal felicity. The dialogue of Euripides is sometimes dull and heavy; the construction of his fable infirm and inartificial; and if in the chorus he assumes another form, and becomes a more elevated poet, he still is at a loss to make it serve the interests of the piece. Wearied by his dialectics, and again refreshed by his chorus, I cannot but exclame

There be *two* Richards in the field today.

Aristophanes, who ridicules him in his Comedies, treats him disdainfully as the competitor of So-

phocles, and speaks probably the sense of the Athenians in the meridian of their literature. If however he was not considered by them as the equal of Sophocles in dramatic power, still sensible men in all ages will respect him, and the more so, because they will fancy that they discover in him greater wisdom than others have discovered: for while many things in his tragedies are direct, and many proverbial, others are allusive and vague, occurring in various states of mind and temperatures of feeling. There is little of the theatrical in his works; and his characters are more anxious to shew their understandings than their sufferings.

Euripides came down farther into common life than Sophocles, and he farther down than Eschylus: one would have expected the reverse. But the marvelous had carried Eschylus from the earth, and he filled with light the whole region in which he rested. The temperate greatness and pure eloquence of Pericles formed the moral constitution of Sophocles, who had exercised with him a principal magistracy in the republic; and the demon of Socrates, not always unimportunate, followed Euripides from the school to the theatre. The decencies of the boudoir were unknown to him: he would have shocked your chambermaids. Talthybius calls Polyxena a calf; her

mother had done the same. Hercules, in Alcestis, is drunk.

DELILLE.

This is horrible, if true. Virgil (to venture nothing further about Racine), Virgil is greatly more judicious in his Dido.

LANDOR.

The passion of Dido is always true to Nature. Other women have called their lovers cruel: she calls Eneas so, not chiefly for betraying and deserting her, but for hazarding his life by encountering the tempests of a wintry sea.

Even if it were not to foren lands and unknown habitations that you were hastening, even if Troy were yet in existence, and you were destined thither, would you choose a season like this? would you navigate a sea of which you are ignorant, under the stars of winter?

I must repeat the lines, for the sake of proposing an improvement.

Quinetiam *hyberno* moliris sidere classem,
Et mediis properas aquilonibus ire per altum...
Crudelis! quod si non arva aliena domosque
Ignotas peteres, et Troja antiqua maneret,
Troja per *undosum* peteretur classibus æquor?

If *hybernum* were substituted for *undosum*, how incomparably more beautiful would the sentence be for this energetic repetition! Adjectives

ending with *osus* express abundance and intensity to such a degree, that some learned men derive the termination from *odi*, the most potent and universal of feelings. If it be so, *famosus*, *jocosus*, *nemorosus*, *fabulosus*, *sabulosus*, &c, must have been a later brood.

Undosum, with all its force, would be far from an equivalent for *hybernum*, even if the latter held no fresh importance from apposition.

My admiration of the author of the Eneid, as you see, is not inferior to yours: but I doubt whether he has displayed *on the whole* such poetical powers as the author of Alcestis, who far excels in variety and peculiarity of character all poets excepting Shakespear. He has invented, it is true, nothing so stupendous nor so awful as the Prometheus: but who has? The Satan of Milton himself sinks below it; for Satan, if he sometimes appears with the melancholy grandeur of a fallen Angel, and sometimes as the antagonist of Omnipotence, is often a thing to be thrown out of the way, among the rods and foolscaps of the nursery.

Still I wish that Virgil were a little more followed by our sweepers of the Haram; he might be, without diminution to their grace or dignity. He has been once in his riddle:

Dic quibus in terris (et eris mihi magnus Apollo)
Tres pateat *cœli* spatium non amplius ulnas.

The family of Cœlius, you know, was of Verona, and occasionally, it is probable, a visitant of Mantua. He upon whose tomb the invention of Menalcas was about to be exercised, is perhaps the same to whom, fifteen years before, Catullus addressed two of his lighter compositions. Now, Abbé,

Know you the land,
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute?

DELILLE.

Out upon it! I have it: a grocer's shop kept by one Nightingale. It cannot be otherwise; for olives and citrons in their natural state are ugly enough, but preserved and pickled they fairly beat almonds and raisins, figs, pistachios, and prunes.

LANDOR.

I have heard the paradox, that the author intended no enigma.

DELILLE.

His enemies and rivals may assert it.

LANDOR.

They declare that he really means Turkey.

DELILLE.

Ha! ha! ha! spiteful rogues! If it were indeed not a man's house, but a region of the earth, it must be one where there is no peach, apricot, plum, raspberry, strawberry, cranberry, cherry, grape, currant, or crab; and I conceive that in such a situation there can hardly be citron or olive. Then the nightingale... He sings for a shorter season than any other bird. His song continues few weeks. There is something in it like the happiness of man before the Fall; vivid and exuberant, but melancholy from its solitude, and from the shades that we perceive are closing on it.

LANDOR.

You have earned your release from doubt. Whatever was the poet's first intention, he himself now declares that he has no concern in Nightingale's shop, that his idea is not borrowed from Virgil, and that the land, upon his faith,

Is the clime of the East, is the land of the Sun.

DELILLE.

Pray which? A pleasant release from doubt! a release like a push given by a jailor to his prisoner in the cell, with a cry of *Get out, you rogue!* as he turns the key upon him.

LANDOR.

We may observe also that really

The voice of the nightingale never is mute.

DELILLE.

O yes surely. I am supported by Buffon.

LANDOR.

Songs may be mute; for songs may exist unsung; but voices exist only while they sound. In the same poem I find that

"If ought his lips *essay'd* to groan,
The rushing billows choak'd the tone."

They need not take the trouble: I will answer for lips doing no harm in the way of groaning, let them *essay* it as long as they list.

We have in England, at the present time, many poets far above what was formerly thought mediocrity; but our national taste begins to require excitement. Our poems must contain *strong things*. We call for essences, not for flowers. We run across from the old grove and soft meadow, into the ruined abbey, the Albanian fortress, and the Sultan's garden. We cut down our oaks, and plant cypresses: we reprove our children for not calling a *rose* a *gul:* we kick the first shepherd we meet, and shake hands with the first cut-throat. We still excite tears; but we conjure them forth

at the point of the dagger, and, if they come slower than we could wish, we bully and blaspheme.

DELILLE.

Nothing is easier than to catch the air of originality now blowing. Do not wonder that it pleases the generality. You and I perhaps have stopped, like the children and the servants, to look at a fine transparency on a staircase, while many, who called themselves professors, have passed a Raphael by, and have never noticed it. Let us censure no one for being easily pleased, but let *us* do the best we can. Whenever I find a critic or satirist vehement against the writers of his age and country, I attribute more of his inspiration to vanity than to malignity, much as I may observe of this. No good writer was ever long neglected; no great man overlooked by men equally great. Impatience is a proof of inferior strength, and a destroyer of what little there may be. Whether, think you, would Shakespear be amused or mortified, if he were sitting in the pit during the performance of his best tragedy, and heard no other exclamation from his next neighbour, than, *How beautifully those scenes are painted! what palaces, waterfalls, and rocks!*

LANDOR.

He, whose poems are worth all that have been composed from the Creation to the present hour, was so negligent or so secure of fame, as to preserve no copy of them. Homer and he, the one by necessity, the other by choice, confided to the hearts of men the treasures of their genius, which were, like conscience, unengraved words. A want of sedulity, at least in claiming the property of thoughts, is not among the deficiencies of our modern poets. Some traveler, a little while ago, was so witty as to call Venice Rome, not, indeed, the Rome of the Tiber, but the Rome of the sea. A poet, warm with keeping up the ball from gazette to gazette, runs instantly to the printers, out of breath at so glorious an opportunity of perpetuating his fame, and declares to all Europe that he had called Venice Rome the year before. We now perceive, but too late for the laurel which they merited, what prodigious poets were your Marat and Bonaparte and Robespierre, with whom England one day was Tyre, another day Carthage, and Paris the Rome of the Seine.

DELILLE.

The most absurd imitation of antiquity I can remember any where, is in Stay's *Modern Philosophy*. He had found in Virgil the youths and

maidens, carried on their biers before the faces of their parents; and he makes those of England *hang themselves* before them. He was unaware that the parents might cut them down, or that the young people could think it likely.

Ergo, quæ jubeat prædura incommoda, vitam
Exsolvunt letho; seu ferrum in viscera condunt,
Seu se præcipites in *flumen*, in *æquora* mittunt,
Seu potius laqueo innexo suspendere *gaudent*
Se manibus *persæpe* suis *ante ora parentum*.

Lib. III.

LANDOR.

We have wandered (and conversation would be tedious unless we occasionally did so) far from our subject: but I have not forgotten your Cyclops nor my Caliban. The character of the Cyclops is somewhat broad and general, but worthy of Euripides, and such as the greatest of Roman poets was incapable of conceiving: that of Caliban is peculiar and stands single; it is admirably imagined and equally well sustained. Another poet would have made him spiteful: Shakespear has made the infringement of his idleness the origin of his malice. He has also made him grateful; but then his gratitude is the return for an indulgence granted to his evil appetites. Those who

by nature are grateful are often by nature vindictive: one of these properties is the sense of kindness, the other of unkindness. Religion and comfort require that the one should be cherished and that the other should be suppressed. The mere conception of the monster, without these qualities, without the sudden impressions which bring them vividly out, and the circumstances in which they are displayed, would not be, to considerate minds, so stupendous as it appeared to Warton, who little knew that there is a *nil admirari* as requisite to wisdom as to happiness.

No new fiction of a supernatural being exists in poetry. Hurd traced the genealogy of the Faeries, and fancied he made a discovery. The Sylphs have only another name. Witches and wizards and giants, apparently powerful agents, generally prove the imbecility of the author who has any thing to do with them. Dragons and demons awaken our childish fancies, some of which remain with us to the last. Dreams perhaps generated them, superstition presented them with names and attributes, and the poet brings them forth into action.

Take your Boileau. Some morning, when we are both of us quite at leisure, I will engage to

make out the full hundred of puerilities in your grave, concise, elegant poet.

DELILLE.

There are excellences, my friend, in Boileau, of which you cannot judge so correctly as a native can: for instance his versification.

LANDOR.

I would not creep into the secrets of a versification, upon which even you, M. Delille, can ring no changes; a machine which must be regularly wound up at every six syllables, and the construction of which is less artificial than that of a cuckoo-clock. The greater part of the heroic verses in your language may be read with more facility as anapestic than as iambic: there is not a syllable which may not become either short or long, however it usually be pronounced in conversation. The secret of conciseness I know and will communicate to you, so that you may attain it in the same manner and with the same facility as Boileau and Voltaire have done.

DELILLE.

Indeed it costs me infinite pains, and I almost suspect that I have sometimes failed.

LANDOR.

Well then, in future you may be master of it

without any pains at all. Do what they did. Throw away the little links and hinges, the little cramps and dovetails, which lay upon the tables of Homer and of Virgil, which were adjusted, with equal nicety, by Cicero, Plato, and Demosthenes, and were not overlooked by Bossuet and Pascal; then dock the tail of your commas, and behold a period.

The French are firmly persuaded that all poetry, to be quite perfect, must be theirs or like it. I never conversed with one of them on the subject, who did not remark to me the obligations that Milton lay under to the Abbé Delille, and Shakespear to Voltaire. Among the proofs of national vanity, not indeed equal to this, but still amusing enough, is the declaration of a grave writer on heraldry, that Raphael, Correggio, Leonardo, were incapable of painting a *fleur de lis*, and that none but a Frenchman by birth and *courage* could arrive at this summit of glory. His words are these:

J'estime qu'il est fort difficile, de bien faire et representer une fleur de lis *mignonnement troussée*, qui n'est peintre excellent et François *de nation et de courage*: car un Allemand, un Anglois, Espagnol, et Italien, n'en sçauront *venir à son honneur*, pour la bien proportionner.—Theatre d'honneur par Fauyn, b. 2. c. 6. p. 185.

What is called a fleur de lis is in fact a spear-head. Chiflet wrote a treatise to prove that it was a *bee*. Joannes Ferrandus Aniciensis composed an Epinicion *pro* liliis. It is wonderful that painters so dexterous left any serious doubt,

whether what they had drawn so accurately were a flower, a spear-head, or a bee. In this confusion, which existed in the minds of men before their time, the Florentines used it as the symbol of their city, that is, as a lily; and such is the name it has always had in heraldry.

The good Abbé Delille entertained a sincere and high esteem for Monsieur Milton, but felt assured that Adam and Eve, Michael and Satan, could not be *mignonnement troussés* unless by the hand of a Parisian.

I should be sorry to have debased these *Conversations* by attention to a writer of so mean a cast as Boileau, if it might not be useful to some of our popular critics, who never suspected that he was deficient in correctness of thought or expression, and who recommend him to the rising poets as a perfect model. A grub, if you hook it with dexterity, may catch a tunny. I throw mine upon the water, and leave it there.

CONVERSATION XVI.

THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER

AND

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER

AND

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

YOUR Majesty now perceives all the benefits of the Holy Alliance, and may remember my enumeration of them. Here is a fact for every word. The Holy Allies cannot retract: they have admitted the principle: they have gone to work upon it. Austria possesses Italy: turbulence in neighbouring states may be repressed by invasion: there is not a monarch in Europe who denies it; not one who, whatever his fears, whatever his imprudence may be, will oppose by action or word your long-meditated conquest of the Turkish empire.

ALEXANDER.

Capo d'Istria, you are a Greek, and would en-

gage me, prepared or unprepared, in war, for the defence of your native country.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Pardon me, my emperor! a Greek, it is true, I am, but you will find me not precipitate. The country of a statesman is the council-board of his prince. Let the pack bark in the kennel; but the shepherd-dog sleeps upon the wallet of his master.

ALEXANDER.

I have never yet caught you running into vagaries and extravagancies, such as even the learned and wise sometimes allow to themselves, in their frowardness and warm blood. Nothing is idler, nothing is more directly in opposition to the actual state of things, happily re-established in Europe, nothing is attended by worse consequences, than to mention the ancient republics as models of good government, or their primary citizens as great men. I have agreed with my allies, to banish or imprison the professors who in future shall do it; and I hope by degrees to introduce a general law (for Europe must be governed on one system) under the enactment of which law, whoever is found guilty of printing or possessing any book, modern or ancient, containing such pestiferous doctrines, shall be shut up in a for-

tress, or sent to join the armies on the frontier. Reason with yourself now. In such governments what should you or I be? Well may you bow; it is not to me, but to truth and conviction. England calls herself the mistress of letters, of liberty, of arts; and indeed she possesses more than nine parts in ten of what exist on our portion of the globe. In relation to her I will not talk of you or me; but suppose her to have produced the personages her unwary youth are so prone to admire and applaud. According to her laws and usages, Brutus would have been hanged at Newgate; Cato buried with a stake thro his body in the high-road; Cicero transported to Botany-bay; Phocion, instead of being called upon to serve his country, some forty or fifty times, would have lost his election in any borough of the three kingdoms; Aristides would not have been thought worth the oyster-shell, on which his name was to be written in order to banish him; and the death of Epaminondas would be reported as coldly to the court, by some general who can hardly write, as Picton's was lately.

I am nauseated with this dust which people stirr up about antiquity. Come, give me your opinions, supposing war inevitable.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

First then, if war is inevitable, I must publish in all the journals, on the testimony of merchants and bankers, that the differences are all accommodated. Fifteen thousand roubles will purchase you the principal gazetteers of England; one thousand those of France. The violence and pride of the Turkish character will indeed at last break off accommodation. Your good allies, at your earnest entreaty, will zealously interfere, to avoid the effusion of blood. You must request their advice how to avert this tremendous evil: you must weep over the decrepit fathers of families, the virtuous wives, the innocent children, the priests at the altar, with God in their mouths, weltering in their blood.

ALEXANDER.

To avoid all remonstrance on Greece, I must now further tell you my reasons for what you think forbearance. It has been agreed privately among my brother rulers, that each, in the desire of peace and holiness, shall invade his neighbour, in a friendly and family way; first however protesting, in the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, that his armies on the frontier had never such an object or idea as invasion, and shall carry into execution these salutary plans, in all sim-

plicity and sincerity, whenever he judges it convenient. It has, besides, been declared to me, as the opinion of them all, that Turkey is not yet sufficiently despotic; that the Janisaries are but Jacobins in loose trowsers, and that the violence they often committ, on the Sublimity of their Emperor, is of dangerous example. We deem it requisite to ensure our inviolability, and to execute what our good pleasure prompts us, not only without a struggle, but without a murmur.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

The worst part of their institutions and usages, is the misapplication of the bow-string, which sometimes gives an awkward twang across the neck of a vizier, and, just the contrary of what one would suppose, is always the most terrible when it happens to have no arrow to work upon.

ALEXANDER.

Another thing...Do not you know that the liberation of Greece, if this liberation did not make them one and all my vassals, would be greatly to the benefit of England? Be cautious: hold your tongue upon it: the ministers of England have at present no such suspicion. If they had, they would fit out a cutter, and perhaps five-and-twenty marines, to assist them; a force

considerably more than proportionate to that which they directed against Constantinople in the late war; and this they would be the better disposed to do, as it would authorize them in the eyes of Parliament, and of the nation, to appoint a commissariate of ten or fifteen, and about the same number of commissioners, so that every member of the Cabinet might have a new appointment at his disposal, with a comfortable half-pay for life after one month's service.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Sire, not only England, but the potentates of France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Italy, should in sound policy desire the formation of republics in Greece; considering that country (of which they know nothing better) as a mere drain, whereby the ill humours of their subjects may be carried off. It should serve them as a depôt of exportation for all those whose opinions are dangerous; just as America is to England. It is nearer at hand, may be reached at less expense, and there is also this further advantage, that if they should publish their opinions, neither the princes nor their subjects can read them: the former then cannot be offended, nor the latter led astray.

ALEXANDER.

How will France, England, Sweden, act upon this occasion ?

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Your Majesty must know that England is not in a condition to equipp twenty thousand troops, and that the maintenance of such a force, in the field, would cost her more than a hundred thousand would cost Russia. Her last year's expenses in the contest with France, were three times greater than all the expenses in all the campaigns of Peter the Great ; and her march to Paris cost more than the building of Petersburgh. If her ministers had ever been men of calculation, as they should have been above all others, from the habits and wants of their country, they would have avoided, as Walpole did, nearly all continental wars, and would have been contented to throw in a military and monied force, there only where its weight and its celerity must turn the balance.

ALEXANDER.

England is a brilliant performer, but bad timist.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Employments in England are properties, holden under certain families. Victories and conquests are secondary objects in her wars. Against the

most consummate generals and the most enthusiastic troops in Europe, was despatched an inexperienced young prince, in whom the soldiers having no confidence, lost that which personal courage and national pride had implanted in themselves. Every new disgrace and disaster was a new reason for employing him. Expedition followed expedition, defeat followed defeat. On another occasion, republicans were taken out of the prisons, and brigaded with royalists, to fight for the king of France. They landed on the shores of their country, and slew their comrades. The city of Ferrol was to be attacked: neither the general nor any person under him knew its fortifications or its garrison. They saw the walls, and turned back; altho the walls, on the side where they landed, were incapable of sustaining one discharge of artillery, and the garrison consisted of half an imperfect regiment; and altho the city of Corunna, seven miles distant, is commanded by the hills above it, in that direction, with walls even more feeble, and a garrison still more defective, and might have been taken at the same time by the same forces: an attack by sea would be hopeless. Even the state of Antwerp was unexamined, when an attack was to be made

against it; nay, the English ministers had never heard that the island of Walcheren was unhealthy; by which ignorance they lost three thousand men.

The duke of Wellington himself, then untitled, was superseded by two old generals, one after the other, at the moment when he had gained the most arduous of his victories. Nelson's brave heart was almost broken by persevering injustice and by proud neglect. He returned, like another Bellerophon, from unexpected and undesired success. Constantinople, which never contains fewer than forty thousand fighting men, was to be assailed by four thousand English; a number not sufficient to garrison the Seraglio, as your Majesty will find next October.

The ministers of England have squandered away the vast resources of their country, among their supporters and dependents. The people are worne down with taxes, and hardly any thing short of an invasion could rouse them again to war. Besides, in times of discontent, it is dangerous to collect together so large an army, as would be sufficient for any important purpose. The armies of Europe have not yet done all they are destined to do. The pertinacity of rulers, in making them the instruments of their ambition, has made them the arbiters of their fate. I would

not speak so clearly, if I were not convinced that your Majesty will find full occupation for yours. Soldiers can never stand idle long together: they must turn into citizens or into rebels. The Janisaries are only a *translation* of the Pretorian-guards.

ALEXANDER.

This seems true: and certain I am that England is not formidable to me just now.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Strike the blow, and she will be less so. If she attack you, let her attack you in possession of Turkey, not in writing a declaration of war. Threaten her with exclusion for twenty years from all your ports, if she moves.

ALEXANDER.

Her high spirit would not brook this language.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Her spirit must rise and fall with her condition. She has thrown her enemy upon the ground, but he will rise up first. In a time of the greatest plenty, England removes a tax upon malt, to the advantage of the brewer only. She will procede in conciliating first one trade, then another, until she sacrifices her *sinking-fund*, which ought to be sacred as the debt itself. It should never have been diminished: on the contrary it should have been augmented, with whatever could have been

curtailed from unnecessary and ostentatious offices. Yet I confess I do indeed entertain some fears on the part of England.

ALEXANDER.

All at once!

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Yes, sire! I am afraid that even a short delay may give her time to turn herself and open her eyes. It is her interest that we do not interfere in the affairs of Greece: it is her interest to watch over them, brood over them, and foster them, secretly into full maturity. If she thinks wisely, or thinks at all, she will consider the minor constitutional governments, and the secondary maritime powers, not merely as members, but as vital parts of herself. By the provisions of the Holy Alliance, Russia has obtained the same power and the same right of interfering, in the political affairs of Europe, as she obtained by her victories over the Turks in those of Servia, Moldavia, and Wallachia. Your Majesty has wiped away with the soft part of the pen, what the British minister thought he had written so deeply in the treaty of Vienna.

ALEXANDER.

I shall certainly make some demonstrations, on the side both of Greece and of Spain. The

English, I hope, may be intimidated. If they should assist South America, my views of commerce in that quarter will be clouded, and those of conquest utterly shut out.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

England looks so long at an object that her eyes grow dim upon it. What she most should deprecate, she must at last expect, a terrible conflict with her liberated provinces. The best, the only allies she could conciliate, are the rising states of the south: she should be the first to help them in their distress, the most assiduous to strengthen them in their growth.

ALEXANDER.

I must prevent this.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Alas! sire, you could as easily prevent it from another planet. At present you are among the least formidable of her enemies: you never can touch her but on the Mediterranean or Adriatic.

If indeed she sits down quietly, and sees you take possession, as you propose to do, of California, and the coasts to the north of that province, by consent of the Spanish king, then indeed may she have reason to tremble, all the present century, for her dominions in Hindostan.

The conquest of them you will always find impracticable from the side of Tartary, thro which Bonaparte, in the crassitude of his ignorance, fancied a road was to be opened. If the Americans and English permitt your majesty to occupy as much of the American shores as you, by your imperial *ukase*, lay claim to, you become the arbitrator in the first dispute between them, and possess the commerce that should belong to both. I am afraid that, instead of this, another kind of Holy Alliance may be formed against you; and that America, Sweden, England, Austria, Prussia, may discover the necessity of putting a stop to your career: nor would it be surprising if, after some future and not distant war, Odessa should be the capital of an independent and rich kingdom, standing up erect between you and Turkey, and bounded by the Danube and the sea of Azof. Take, *while* you can take, and *what* you can take. England may not always be the dupe of a minister, whom the lustre of a diamond brings down from his highest flight, and a snuff-box shuts up for your pocket. Make haste, Sire! acknowledge the liberty of Greece.. and crush it.

ALEXANDER.

I had begun to doubt of your sincerity, my faithful friend, and almost to question the sound-

ness of your politics. In our menacing the Turkish empire, the interference of France is much to be apprehended: do not you think so, Capo d'Istria?

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

The good king of France is occupied in rocking to sleep the martial spirit of his children, as he calls them. Had he been king of France five-and-thirty years ago, a reform, which might afterwards have been done away, would have prevented the revolution. The better part of his army is favorable to the cause of Greece; and the Spartan fife is pitched to the carmagnole. France wants colonies; England has too many. To England the most successful war is, on this account, more disastrous than to her defeated adversary: her conquests are the worst of evils to her colonies, and the destruction of another's commerce is a violent shock to hers. Cyprus, or Egypt preferably, would abundantly compensate France: either would accelerate the ruin of her rival, or at least increase her distresses. France will be persuaded by England to make some feeble remonstrances, but your majesty will be informed of their import. Supposing, for nothing is impossible, that England should confide in the sincerity of her neighbour, it could produce no more

than an intemperance of language, the echoes of which boisterousness would sound but feebly on the shores of the Bosphorus.

ALEXANDER.

The spirit of your countrymen is not a spirit which I am at all disposed to encourage. I abhorr republicanism.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

So your Majesty should. I feel no such abhorrence; but your Majesty shall find that all my speculations are lowered down to policy and duty. Leave the Greeks, my countrymen, to their own efforts for a time: every day will produce some new atrocity: mutual hatred will increase: mutual efforts will be made incessantly: both parties will exhaust themselves: but above all, the Turkish cavalry, the strength of the empire, will perish where it cannot act. Among the mountains and defiles it will want both exercise and provender. The Greeks, on becoming your subjects, under whatever form of government, whether absolute, mixt, (permitt me an absurdity) or free, will be heartily glad to repose; and granting that their fibre still quivers, their strength will be unable to trouble or molest you. Propose to the king of Persia the invasion and possession of the best Turkish provinces, such as Bagdad

and Damascus; offer him either a great or a small force, whichever he chooses, of the infantry now quartered on his borders. This will prove your sincerity and ensure his success. You may *mediate* afterwards, and recover the whole, when the sons contend for the kingdom.

ALEXANDER.

But Austria will not assist, and may oppose me.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

God grant it! Her assistence, at the best, would only be in cutting up the prey; but her opposition would end in being cut up herself. The united kingdoms of Poland and Hungary! We must be fashionable, may it please your Majesty . . . *united* is the word of the day . . . unless we talk of marriages. The next year may produce that which must happen within the next twenty. The Adriatic is the boundary of the Eastern empire: the line above it is imaginary both to geographer and politician. No Runic spell was ever so powerful as the three words, *Italy is free.* They would disband every army on the continent, and carry you, as in a whirlwind, to the British Channel. You do not want so much; but what you want you may have. Power says as softly and as invitingly to your Majesty, as Love said to an emperor in former

times, *Imperatori quod libet licet* . . a principle which forms the basis of the Holy Alliance.

ALEXANDER.

I again acknowledge my apprehension of France, both from her perpetual favour toward Turkey, since the reign of Francis the First, and from her jealousy of any continental superior.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Apparently there is reason from these motives; but others operate in a contrary direction. France will be very cautious of raising up a military chief. She remembers how much has been effected by one unworthy of her confidence, one great only by the littleness of his competitors. She remembers that her king was imposed upon her by the conqueror. The command of armies excites to ambition, and every officer expects promotion under a new dynasty. The king will avoid this by the preservation of peace, which is as necessary to him as war ever was to his predecessor.

Let us now take another view of the subject, and look beyond the king toward the army. Three hundred thousand French bodies lay exposed and stiff along your territory. Place the French army between a Russian and a Turkish, and say to it, *Frenchmen, here are those who*

slew your companions in arms, unprovoked aggressors; and here, on the other side, are those with whom hitherto you have lived in amity, the slaughterers and oppressors of the Greeks, those children of Leonidas and Epaminondas, the nation which founded Marseilles and Toulon, Ajaccio and Aleria, and left imprinted its finest features on your character: they would consult their glory rather than their revenge, and their only hesitation would be, whether it allowed them to attack the weaker enemy. A single spark fires and explodes them.

I must remark to your Majesty that Russia is the sole country in the world whose policy is immutable. Russia, like the star that shines above her, must remain for ever a guide to steer by. The policy of England has varied more frequently than that of any other nation on record, because in general a new administration deems it necessary to change the system of the former. The persons who now administer the affairs of that country, are persons of humble birth and humbler genius, but are maintained in their places by the timidity of the aristocracy, and by the contempt of all classes for the leaders of opposition. They will hazard nothing: they are far more prudent (weak as they are) than any past ministry for nearly half a cen-

tury. As we have entered into the French national feeling, so will we now into the English, and I am confident of discovering that no hostility is to be apprehended by your Majesty, from the system of either cabinet, or the spirit of either people.

The Englishman, in all respects the contrary of his neighbour, is too great and too fierce a creature to be gregarious. He has little public honour, much private. His own heart makes large demands upon him, national glory none. The innermost regions of Hindostan, the wildest shores of the American Lakes, should have repeated the language of England. This is power; this is glory: Rome acquired it, and civilized the world by it; with how much scantier stores of intellect, how much less leisure, how much less intercourse, how much less philanthropy, how much less wealth! England would not assist the Greeks from any regard to their past glory, or with any prospective view to her own, but because they have suffered much and fought bravely. When the populace has pelted the king amidst his guards, a ceremony not uncommon, and some have been dismounted in the performance of their duty, they have always been hailed with loud cheers. Let a forener be attacked and defend himself in London,

he raises up an army in his favour by the first effort of courage, and the brother of his antagonist clears the ground and demands *fair play* for him: such is the characteristic expression of this brave unbloody people. All, in other countries, crowd about the strong: he alone who prevails is in the right; he alone who wants no assistence is assisted: the Englishman is the friend of the desolate and the defender of the oppressed. Hence his hatred and contempt of those who presume to an equality with him in other states, and the suddenness with which he breaks off all intercourse from the few whom he has admitted to his society. On these principles your Majesty will prepossess a most powerful and generous people in your favour: and altho, in the opinion of a few, the national interest is concerned in maintaining the Turkish empire, the popular mind will aid you in its overthrow.

On no other resolution than the conquest of Turkey, was it prudent in your Majesty to grant the dominion of Italy to Austria. The occupation of Naples does not require an army: four regiments and four hangmen could keep the whole peninsula in subjection. We wanted from all governments an acknowledgement of the dogma, that every ebullition of the public sentiment

should be compressed. We obtained it; we saw it acted on: the first regiment of Austria that marched to Naples paved a road for your guards to Constantinople. Why should we break it up again? why abandon a line of policy, both ends of which are in our hands? England, in the former city, did not stand merely neutral. The whole correspondence, perfidious and traiterous as Englishmen must denominate it, between the king, then at Vienna, and his son, ostensibly at the head of the government, was carried on thro the hands and under the cover of a British envoy. Supposing, which is impossible, that any continental power should dare to oppose you, is there any that would be so powerful in hostility as the Greeks in amity? Every male of that nation, from puberty to decrepitude, would take up arms; even her women, her bishops, her sacristans, her singers.

But France, England, Austria, might confederate. Their confederation would act more feebly than the efforts of any one singly, and would ruin the finances of the only state among them which, at any time hereafter, might injure you long or materially. They could not hold together three months, no, nor one; the very first would serve for the seed-

time of discord. France has a long account to settle with several of her neighbours: they know it, and will keep themselves shut closely up at home.

Sweden and Prussia have one only guarantee for their integrity. Prussia may expect and obtain much, particularly if England moves a foot. Whatever your Majesty could take away from Sweden, is of no value to you, and would be taken only as a punishment for defection. She will therefor seek to cultivate the friendship of a potentate, interested more in preserving than in ruining her, alone capable of either, and alike capable of both. She sees the necessity of peace: for altho her soldiers have been at all times the best that ever marched upon the earth, they never marched without some great object; and none such is now before them. The Swedes are the most orderly and the most civilized people on the continent. Lovers as they are of their country, if they felt any unnecessary weight of taxes, they would change their habitations, well knowing that Swedes make Sweden, in whichever hemisphere. The finest countries in the world are still unoccupied. Avarice hath seized a few bays, a few river-banks, a few savannahs, a few mines, of America: the better and greater part remains unpeopled. Emigration has only begun: the

colonists, at present there, are merely *avant-couriers* and explorers. What rational creature would live where the earth itself is taken away from him, by Nature, one-half of the year, where he sees nothing but snow and sky one-half of his lifetime, if the produce of his labour and the exercise of his will were not perfectly his own? Are light and warmth worth nothing? They cost much in every cold climate. There must also be a great expenditure, in more costly cloathing, in more copious food, in more spirituous beverage, in more profuse and wasteful hospitality. For solitude is intolerable, even to the morose and contemplative, without warmth or light. Every man then is severely taxed by the North itself: rewards, comforts, enjoyments, privileges, should be proposed and invented to detain him; not impositions, not hardships. Sweden, whoever be her king, whatever her constitution, must avoid them, and must employ all imaginable means of procuring, from her own soil, her food, her raiment, and her luxuries. She should interdict every unnecessary importation. Her worst land should be proved to be capable of producing fruits, from which may be extracted strong and delicious and salutary liquors. Such is the beneficence of Providence, rarely well seconded, and often thwarted

and intercepted, that the least fertile countries and the least genial climates, would mature vinous fruits, and administer a beverage more wholesome, and more grateful, than fifty-nine parts in sixty of the grape-wines, brewed in Italy and Spain. This is perhaps the first time, since the reign of Cyrus, that a minister of state ever talked on such matters. When I was twenty years younger I should have come forward with fear and blushes, if I had a word to say to my emperor on plums, cherries, currants, and raspberies. But a labourer may forget his weariness amid the murmur of his hives, and a citizen be attached to his native soil by an apple-tree and a gooseberry-bush. Gardeners are never bad subjects. Sweden will encourage agriculture, plantation, and fishery. The latter is the most fertile of her possessions, and wants no garrisons or encampments. These occupations will deaden excitability to war, without injuring the moral and physical force by which, whenever it is necessary, it may be supported. But she appears to me further removed from such a necessity than any other nation in the world; and your Majesty may calculate, for the remainder of your life, on her neutrality.*

* It cannot be expected by those who know of what materials the cabinets of Europe are composed, that any person

One argument answers all objections. If they all agreed that Naples should be invaded, when not a single act of violence had been committed, because the Neapolitans were turbulent, how greatly more forcible is the reason, when a more powerful nation is not only more turbulent, but when the same principles as those of the Neapolitans are in action on one side, and a fanaticism in hostility to Christianity on the other! Your Majesty is head of the Greek church: bishops and patriarchs have been massacred by the Mahometans. It becomes not your dignity to listen to

in them should reason either thus benevolently or thus acutely. This is a blemish in my book; which however would be worse without it. The practice of Shakespear and Sophocles is a better apology for me than I could offer of my own. If men were to be represented as they are, who would care about the greater part of the greatest? My three volumes would shrink into one, and two-thirds of it would be flat and fruitless. Principles and ideas are our objects: we must reflect them from hard and smooth, from high and low, and lead people where they can see them best, and are most inclined to look at them.

I have attributed to both speakers more wisdom and reflexion than they possess. The ideas in the preceding pages, are not such as would occurr to any statesman now living. It is as difficult in life to shew that those who are little *are* little, as to shew that those who are great *are* great; and in dialogue it is even more so: for if all men were represented in it just as they are, the reader would throw the book aside with indifference or with disgust.

any accommodation on such outrages. You might have pardoned (which would have been too much) the insult offered to your embassador; you might have yielded to the entreaties of your allies, in forbearing from the same steps as had been taken by Austria; you might have permitted the aggrandizement of that powerful neighbour; but you cannot abandon the church of God, placed under your especial care and sole protection.

ALEXANDER.

Capo d'Istria! is it you who talk so?

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

No; it is your Majesty.

ALEXANDER.

I have not always found the high pleasure from my conquests, which I was led by my ministers and generals to expect. When I had purchased of old Cronstadt the entrance into Finland, and when I heard of it being the happiest and best cultivated portion of the north, and inhabited by not only the most industrious but by the most civilized and honest and peaceable of men, I expected the compliments of the empress my mother, who, instead of them, calmly said to me, *Son Alexander, if you have done well, my congratulations are unnecessary; if otherwise, they will serve you little:* and saying this, she left me,

with her blessing, to visit and comfort a young man in the hospital, whose leg had been amputated that morning; and I found her, on her return, making out an order for the money she should remitt to his parents, until he could help them as before, by his business as a carpenter.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Sire, let the history of the empress mother be engraven on the hearts of fifty millions, and redd besides by as many millions as you permitt to read, yet, like novels and romances, it will interest few beyond the hour, and influence still fewer, even so long: while the heroism of your Majesty must leave an indelible impression on many generations, and those who do not read will be as sensible of it as those who do.

ALEXANDER.

I am not quite certain that God approves of what my mother disapproves. While we were walking half a mile over scarlet cloth, to render him thanks for the victories of our arms in Finland, he knew as well as I do that they were not the victories of our arms, but of our mint; and he sees the Swedish and Russian orders, which Cronstadt wears upon his bosom, drawn back from by the people, as if they were

flakes of cotton from Cairo. Yet this is according to our religion, and to that of every Christian church in the world; and many princes have done worse in zealously serving heaven. My brother Ferdinand of Spain has a sister, the most religious woman upon earth. She did the other day what puzzled me, and I cannot say even yet whether it be altogether as it should be. Resolved to offer a silver lamp to the Virgin Mary, whose eyes by this time, the duchess piously considers, may want rather more light than they did formerly, when it was brought to her palace by the silversmith, he, as he held his workmanship in one hand, presented the other to her treasurer for payment. She herself came graciously forth from her apartment, surveyed her offering with reverential joy, ejaculated a prayer and a laud, and turning to the tradesman, said she entertained no doubt whatever that the lamp was of proper weight, but that the hook by which it was to be suspended seemed too short. He answered, that he had measured every part, and had found it to correspond with her royal order.

Let us see, said the religious queen, *whether it hangs as it should do before the picture.*

A chair was brought: the silversmith hung up

his lamp. As he descended, still gazing on it, and stopping with both hands its oscillation, the duchess touched his arm gently with the extremities of two fingers, and said with religious firmness, *Remove it at your peril! it is now consecrated. Beware of sacrilege!* She then crossed herself before the holy Virgin, and implored her protection for herself, and then for each of her children by name, and then for her brother Ferdinand, and her brother Carlos, and her brother Francesco, and her sister of Portugal, and her cousins at Naples, and her other cousins, the living and the dead, and for her poor blind sinful people, and above the rest of them, after the clergy and cloistered, for that artificer behind her, who would remain all his life unpaid.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Ah! that is carrying legitimacy a trifle too far: just conquest is another thing. Princes have an undoubted right to the coined money of their subjects; but plate and jewels can only be taxed, and not taken in the concrete.

ALEXANDER.

My armies cannot stirr in this season of the year; the Turks can march all winter.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Let them: we shall have occupation enough in

preparing stores and shewing our sincerity. We shall be compelled into the war when we are ready. Wait only until after the Ramadan: the fierceness of the Turks will subside by fasting, and differences will arise between the European and Asiatic troops.

ALEXANDER.

We cannot speculate on the latter case, and our soldiers also will fast...

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Or not; as your Majesty pleases. The Christian is the only religion, old or new, in which individuals and nations can dispense, by another's permission, with their bounden duties: such are fasts, curtesies, crosses, genuflexions, processions, and other bodily functions.

ALEXANDER.

This would be a religious war; and Islamism may send into the field half a million of combatants.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

Then is victory ours. Devastated provinces cannot furnish provisions to one-third of the number in one body, and they would fight not for articles of faith, but for articles of food, Turk against Turk, not against Greek and Russian. He who has the best commissariate has the strongest

army. Your Majesty can bring into the field as large a force as the enemy, a force better disciplined and better supplied : hence the main body will be more numerous ; and with the main body the business of the war will be effected. March directly for Constantinople. All great empires have been lost and gained by one battle, your own excepted. The conquest of the Ottoman will be achieved by one : twenty would not win Rhodes. He who ruined the Persians at Marathon was repulsed from the little rock of Paros. I beg your Majesty's pardon for such an offence against the dignity of diplomacy, as a quotation of ancient history, at a time when the world abounds with young *attachés à la legation*, all braver than Miltiades, all more eloquent than Herodotus, all more virtuous than Aristides, and all more wise than Solon. Your Majesty smiles. I have heard their patrons swear it upon their honour.

ALEXANDER.

The very thing on which such an oath should be sworne : the altar is worthy of the offering, and the offering of the altar.

CAPO D'ISTRIA.

A great encounter within sight of Constantinople throws the most distant dominions of the sultan into your hands : Selim, the Prophet, and

Fate, bend before you. Precedents are good for all, even for Russia: but Russia has great advantages, which other powers have never had, and never will have. Remember, now and for ever, that she alone can play deep at every table and stake nothing.

CONVERSATION XVII.

KOSCIUSKO

AND

PONIATOWSKI.

KOSCIUSKO

AND

PONIATOWSKI.

PONIATOWSKI.

A SHORT and hasty letter, brought by my courier, will have expressed to you, general, with what pleasure I obtained leave of absence for ten days, that I might present you my affectionate homage here in Switzerland.

KOSCIUSKO.

No courier can have arrived, sir; for we hear the children at play in the street, and they would have been earnest to discover what sort of creature is a courier.

PONIATOWSKI.

I myself am no bad specimen of one: I have traversed three kingdoms in five days; such a power of attraction has Kosciusko on Poniatowski.

KOSCIUSKO.

Poniatowski! my brave countryman, I embrace you heartily. Sit down, rest yourself...not upon that chair...the rushes are cut through in the middle...the boys and girls come in, when I am reading in the window or working in the garden, and play their old captain these tricks.

PONIATOWSKI.

I must embrace you again, my general! Always the same kind, tender heart, the same simplicity and modesty! There is little of poetry or of ingenuity in the idea, that your nativity was between the Lion and the Virgin.

KOSCIUSKO.

O Poniatowski! my countryman and friend! how long it is since we met! I require a few moments to recollect your features: the voice, and the heart that gives it utterance, is the same. I am indeed a revolutionist: I invert the order of established things. Usually the countenance is remembered when benefits are forgotten: from defect of sight, which these gashes have injured, your countenance was only such to me as to make me wonder whose it could be, while your services were fresh in my memory; services than which, in ages of heroism, no man ever rendered more

pure or more illustrious to his country. I do not marvel that you have lost the bloom of youth, knowing your anxieties: but how happens it, that after such exertions, such privations, such injuries, (for all honours but one conferred on you, and that too, unless by the voice of your countrymen, are such,) how happens it, I ask you, Poniatowski, that you appear more robust than ever, and retain to the full your activity and animation?

PONIATOWSKI.

Hope is the source of them; the aroma without which our bodies are putridity, the ether without which our souls themselves, so long as they are here on earth, are cold and heavy vapour. If we could but have saved our Poland, O! my comrade!...less men can rule her. Of all arts, this is the easiest, and exercised by the most imbecile. The laws should rule: for their courts, we have always in readiness a cushion, a king, and a cryer...what wicked wretch wants more!

O with what enthusiasm would our legions follow you! why not return amongst us and command us?

KOSCIUSKO.

Where is Poland?

PONIATOWSKI.

She rises from her ashes with new splendour:

in every battle she performs the most distinguished part. . .do you sigh at hearing it!

KOSCIUSKO.

Poniatowski! her blood flows for strangers, and her heroism is but an interlude in the drama of Ambition. She is intoxicated from the cup of Glory, to be dismembered with the less feeling of her loss. When she recovers her senses, in vain will she look around for compassion or for gratitude. Beyond a doubt I am a feeble and visionary politician: nevertheless I will venture to express my opinion, that gratitude, altho it never has been admitted among the political virtues, is one; that whatever is good in morals is also good in politics; and that, by introducing it opportunely and dexterously, the gravest of old politicians might occasionally be disconcerted. Do not let us be alarmed at the novelty: many have presumed to recommend the observance of Justice; and Gratitude is nothing more than Justice in a fit of generosity, and permitting a Love or a Genius to carry off her scales.

PONIATOWSKI.

We live in an age when no experiments of this kind are tried, and when all others are exhausted.

KOSCIUSKO.

True, we see nothing in battle but brute force,

nothing in peace but unblushing perfidy. War, which gave its name to strategems, would recall them, and cannot: they are shut up within the cabinet and counter, where they never should have entered, and the wisest of them are such as would disgrace the talents of a ringdropper.

If the person, to whom Fortune seems to have given the disposal of mankind, had known anything of our national character, he would have augmented the dominions of Poland, instead of diminishing them: if he had known as much of policy as a peasant or a professor, he would have united with it Royal Prussia and Hungary, and its southern boundaries would have been the Danube and the Dnieper. Every German province, excepting a few I am about to mention, would have been erected into a kingdom, under the most powerful or the most popular of its princes, its nobles, its magistrates; representatives would have been elected, standing armies would have been abolished. Thus the existence of the governors and the prosperity of the governed would have been his work, and that work would have been indestructible. The erection of twenty kings in twenty minutes would have abundantly gratified his vanity...a consideration not unimportant when we discourse upon crowned heads, and particularly

upon heads crowned recently, or indeed upon heads of any kind subject to the vortices of power. The Scandinavian Peninsula should have been strengthened by the junction of Denmark, Mecklenburgh, and Pomerania, forming a barrier against the maritime force of England, and (united by confederacy with Poland) against the systematic and unsuspected march of Muscovite aggression. No German kingdom should have contained much more than one million of inhabitants. It was his business to lessen not only the kingly authority but the kingly name.

History has given us no example of a man whose errors were so manifold and so destructive. I confess that I have been mistaken in foretelling his downfall: I calculated from observations on mankind in ages less effete. I could not calculate the forces that resisted him: for I knew only the military and financial force, and this but numerically; I knew not by whom and where and to what specific object it was to be applied. Fortunate! to spring up in a season of rankness and rottenness, when every principle of vitality had been extinguished in the state, either by the *malaria* of despotism, or by the tempests of democracy; when all who came against him from without were weaker in judgement than himself, and when the

wildest temerity was equally sure of success as the most prudent combinations and the best measured conduct. No general, I believe, in the lowest degree versed in war, has been consulted by the principal of the belligerents: this we know, persons the least practised in it have been employed as commanders in chief. The good people of England is persuaded that to open a campaign is as easy as to open an oyster, and to finish it is a thing to be done as quickly as to swallow one.

PONIATOWSKI.

England will alter her system from one of these two causes. Either (at the end of twenty years perhaps) all the families of her aristocracy will be sufficiently enriched, which is the prime motive in all her undertakings; or a serious and earnest effort will be made against increasing danger, and some general of capacity will at last be appointed to satisfy the clamours of the people, and to keep the government, or rather the governors, unshaken. I have heard however that Pichegru and Dumourier have sometimes been consulted by that cabinet.

KOSCIUSKO.

The name of the latter I remember in old gazettes; and I will readily believe that he may have given his advice. Pichegru had no influence there;

he received no marks of confidence, few of courtesy. His wisdom, his modesty, his taciturnity, his disdain of puppets in power, beating each other, head against head, and chuckling each other's language when uppermost, a disdain his stern countenance ill concealed, would be my proofs and vouchers, if I had not also his own declaration. He was incomparably the best general in Europe, and could not often have failed in what he thought expedient. He had however two great defects, either of which might have brought his loyalty into suspicion: he wore no other powder in his hair than what it collected on a march; and he put on boots, when he should have put on buckles.

PONIATOWSKI.

I have heard young Englishmen of distinction say, that they could hardly suppose him to be a Frenchman, unless from his ugliness: that he spoke slowly, contradicted no one, interrupted no one, delivered no opinion of his own unasked, nor indeed at all when he could adduce another's, never aimed at a witticism, never smiled at a misfortune, an awkwardness, or a sneer, never sang, never danced, never spat upon the carpet, or in the presence of a lady, bowed ungracefully and gravely, and had been seen to blush.

KOSCIUSKO.

They might have added, that he refused to execute the decree of the Convention, when no quarter was to be given them; that he hazarded his life for his humanity; and that he invaded and conquered the richest country in the world, and took not away from it one grain of gold. If he had been facetious and eloquent he would have been almost a Phocion: no other man in Europe can be weighed against his scabbard.

PONIATOWSKI.

The French accuse him of betraying the Republic.

KOSCIUSKO.

He saw one thing clearly, and firmly believed another. He saw that the French character could retain no stamp of republicanism; and he believed that the Bourbons would be chastened by adversity. As the Republic must die by a natural death or a violent one, he preferred the former, and he desired that the supreme magistracy should return to that family which had the most orderly and peaceable for its partisans. He knew enough of the Bourbons, to be certain that they never would recompense his services, and enough of human nature in its most exalted state, to feel that a man great as himself could alone be his re-

warder *. We hear many complaints of princes and of fortune: but believe me, Poniatowski, there never was a good or generous action that met with much ingratitude.

PONIATOWSKI.

Is it possible you can say so! you, to whom no statues are erected, no hymns are sung in public processions; you, who have no country . . . and you smile upon such injuries and such losses.

KOSCIUSKO.

My friend, I have lost nothing: I have received no injury: I am in the midst of our country day and night. Absence is not of matter: the body does not make it. Absence quickens our love and elevates our affections. Absence is the invisible and incorporeal mother of ideal beauty. Were I in Poland, how many things are there which would disturb and perhaps exasperate me! Here I can think of her as of some departed soul, not yet indeed cloathed in light, nor exempted from sorrowfulness, but divested of passion, removed from tumult, and inviting to contemplation. She is the dearer to me because she reminds me that I have

* His most Christian Majesty, Charles X., hearing the distresses of Pichegru's family, was graciously pleased to grant his nephew a pension . . . of *three hundred livres!* above twelve pounds!

performed my duty toward her ... Permitt me to go on ... I said that a good or generous action never met with much ingratitude. I do not deny that ingratitude may be very general: but even if we experience it from all quarters, there is still no evidence of its weight or its intensity. We bear upon our heads an immense column of air, but the nature of things has rendered us insensible of it altogether: have we not also a strength and a support against what is equally external, the breath of worthless men? Very far is that from being much or great, which a single movement of self-esteem tosses up and scatters. Slaves make out of barbarians a king or emperor; the clumsiest hand can fashion such misshapen images; but the high and discerning spirit spreads out its wings from precipices, raises itself up slowly by great efforts, acquires ease, velocity, and might, by elevation, and suns itself in the smiles of its Creator.

I have written an inscription for Kosciusko, which may be placed here.

Pro statua Cosciusconis in Soleta Helvetiorum.

HOC.IN.OPPIDO.E.VITA.MIGRAVIT.IMPERATOR.ILLE
QUI . CONSTANTIA . ET . CAUSA . SUA . FRETUS .
ET . DEI . OPT : MAX : JUSTITIA
NEC . DESPERAVIT . IN . PESSIMIS . TEMPORIBUS
NEC . SUOS . DESPERARE . PASSUS . EST
THADDEUS . COSCIUSCO.
PRO . SARMATIAE . ET . AMERICAE . LIBERTATE
VULNERIBUS.MULTIS.ET.GRAVIBUS.QUUM.LABORARET
IN . HELVETIAM . SECESSIT
ET . AEGRIMONIA . OB . AMISSAM . PATRIAM
ATQUE.OB.INCOMMODA.REIPUBLICAE.CONFECTUS.EST.

HEIC . O . HOSPES . UBI . NEMO . TE . REPREHENDET
STRENUUM . LIBERTATIS . VINDICEM . VENERATOR
SI . DANUBIUM . VERSUS . AUT . PADUM . PROFICISCERIS
REFERRE . SALTEM . FAS . ERIT . CIVIBUS . TUIS
PROBUM . LIBERALEM . PERURBANUM . EUM . FUISSE
ET . SAPIENTEM . ET . ERUDITUM.

CONVERSATION XVIII.

MIDDLETON

AND

MAGLIABECHI.

MIDDLETON

AND

MAGLIABECHI.

MAGLIABECHI.

THE pleasure I have enjoyed in your conversation, sir, induces me to render you such a service, as never yet was rendered by an Italian to a stranger.

MIDDLETON.

You have already rendered me several such, M. Magliabechi; nor indeed can any man of letters converse an hour with you, and not carry home with him some signal benefit.

MAGLIABECHI.

Your life is in danger, M. Middleton.

MIDDLETON.

How! impossible! I offend no one, in public or in private: I converse with you only: I avoid all others, and, above all, the busy-bodies of litera-

ture and politics. I court no lady: I never go to the palace: I enjoy no favours: I solicit no distinctions: I am neither poet nor painter. Surely then I, if any one, should be exempt from malignity and revenge.

MAGLIABECHI.

To remove suspense, I must inform you that your letters are opened and your writings read by the Police. The servant whom you dismissed for robbing you, has denounced you.

MIDDLETON.

Was it not enough for him to be permitted to plunder me with impunity? does he expect a reward for this villainy? will his word or his oath be taken?

MAGLIABECHI.

Gently, M. Middleton. He expects no reward: he received it when he was allowed to rob you. He came recommended to you as an honest servant, by several noble families. He robbed them all, and a portion of what he stole was restored to them by the police, on condition that they should render to the Government a mutual service when called upon.

MIDDLETON.

Incredible baseness! can you smile upon it, M. Magliabechi! can you have any communication

with these wretches, these nobles, as you call them, this servant, this police!

MAGLIABECHI.

My opinion was demanded by my superiors, upon some remarks of yours on the religion of our country.

MIDDLETON.

I protest, sir, I copied them in great measure from the Latin work of a learned German.

MAGLIABECHI.

True: I know the book: it is entitled *Facetiæ Facetiarum.* There is some wit and some truth in it: but the better wit is, the more dangerous is it; and Truth, like the Sun, coming down upon us too directly, may give us a brain-fever.

In this country, M. Middleton, we have *jalousies* not only to our windows but to our breasts: we admitt but little light to either, and we live the more comfortably for so doing. If we changed this custom, we must change almost every other, all the parts of our polity having been gradually drawn closer and closer, until at last they form an inseparable mass, of religion, laws, and usages. We condemn as a dangerous error the doctrine of Galileo, that the earth moves about the sun; but we condemn rather the danger than the error of asserting it...

MIDDLETON.

Pardon my interruption. When I see the doctors of your church insisting on a demonstrable falsehood, have I not reason to believe that they would maintain others less demonstrable, and more profitable? All questions of politics, of morals, and of religion, ought to be discussed: but principally should it be examined, whether our eternal happiness depends on any speculative point whatever; and secondly, whether those speculative points on which various nations insist as necessary to it, are well or ill founded. I would rather be condemned for believing that to kill an ibis is a sin, than for thinking that to kill a man is not. Yet the former opinion is ridiculed by all modern nations; while the murder of men by thousands is no crime, provided that they be flourishing and happy, or will probably soon become so; for then they may cause discontent in other countries, and indeed are likely to excite the most turbulence when they sit down together the most quietly.

MAGLIABECHI.

Among your other works I find a manuscript on the inefficacy of prayer. I defended you to my superiors by shewing that Cicero had asserted things incredible to himself, merely for the sake of argument, and had probably written them before

he had fixed in his mind the personages to whom they should be attributed in his dialogues; that, in short, they were brought forward for no other purpose than discussion and explosion. This impiety was forgiven. But every man in Italy has a favorite saint, for whose honour he deems it meritorious to draw (I had almost said the sword) the stiletto.

MIDDLETON.

It would be safer to attempt dragging God from his throne, than to splitt a spangle on their petticoats, or to puff a grain of powder from their perukes. This I know. Nothing in my writings is intended to wound the jealousy of the Italians. Truth, like the juice of the poppy, in small quantities calms men, in larger heats and irritates them, and is attended by fatal consequences in its excess. For which reason, with plain ground before me, I would not expatiate largely, and often made an argument, that offered itself, give way altogether and leave room for inferences. My treatise on prayer was not to be published in my lifetime.

MAGLIABECHI.

And why at any time? Supposing prayer to be totally inefficacious in the object, is not the mind exalted, the heart purified, are not our affections

chastened, our desires moderated, our enjoyments enlarged by this intercourse with the Deity? and are not men the better, as certainly they are the happier, for a belief that he interferes in their concerns? They are persuaded that there is something conditional between them, and that, if they labour under the commission of crimes, their voice will be inaudible as the voice of one under the nightmare.

MIDDLETON.

I wished to demonstrate, that we often treat God in the same manner as we should treat some doating or some passionate old man: we feign, we flatter, we sing, we cry, we gesticulate.

MAGLIABECHI.

Worship him in your own manner, according to the sense he has given you; and let those who cannot exercise that sense, rely upon those who can. Be convinced, M. Middleton, that you never will supplant the received ideas of God: be no less convinced that the sum of all your labours in this field, will be, to leave the ground loose beneath you, and that he who comes after you will sink. In sickness, in our last particularly, we all are poor wretches: we are nearly all laid on a level by it: the dry rot of the mind supervenes, and loosens whatever was fixt in it, except religion.

Would you be so inhumane as to tell any friend in this condition not to be comforted? so inhumane as to prove that the crucifix, which his wandering eye finds at last its resting-place, is of the very same material as his bedpost? Suppose a belief in the efficacy of prayer to be a belief altogether irrational...you may: I never can...suppose it to be insanity itself, would you, meeting a young man who had wandered over many countries in search of a father, until his intellects are deranged, and who, in the fulness of his heart, addresses an utter stranger as the lost parent, clings to him, kisses him, sobs upon his breast, and finds comfort only by repeating *father! father!* would you, M. Middleton, say to this affectionate fond creature, *go home, sit quiet, be silent!* and persuade him that his father is lost to him?

MIDDLETON.

God forbid.

MAGLIABECHI.

You have done it: do it no more: the madman has not heard you; and the father will pardon you when you meet.

MIDDLETON.

Far be it from my wishes and from my thoughts, to unhinge those portals through which we must

enter to the performance of our social duties: but I am sensible of no irreligion, I acknowledge no sorrow or regret, in having attempted to demonstrate that God is totally and far removed from our passions and infirmities, and that whatever seems fit to him, will never seem unfit in consequence of our entreaties. I would inculcate entire resignation to the divine decrees, acquiescence in the divine wisdom, confidence in the divine benevolence. There is something of frail humanity, something of its very decrepitude, in our ideas of God: we are foolish and ignorant in the same manner, and almost to the same degree, as those painters are, who append a grey beard to his chin, draw wrinkles across his brow, and cover him with a gaudy and flowing mantle.

Our Saviour does not command us to pray, altho his example, for especial purposes, appears to countenance it. His nature, and the nature of his mission, might require this intercourse. He says only, "*when ye pray*," &c., or, in other words, "*if you will pray, let your prayer be*," &c. For on more than one occasion, desirous as he was of interfering but little with established usages, he has condemned the prayers of the Jews.

MAGLIABECHI.

They were too long.

MIDDLETON.

They were not longer (as far as I know) than those of other nations*. In short, if we believe the essence of God to be immutable, we must believe his will to be so. Supposing him altered or moved by us, we suppose him subject to our own condition. If he pardons, he corrects his first judgement; he owns himself to have been wrong and hasty; than which supposition what impiety can be greater?

MAGLIABECHI.

Do you question every thing that is not in the form of syllogism, or enthymema, or problem with corollary and solution?

MIDDLETON.

I never said that what is indemonstrable must therefor be untrue: but whatever is indemonstra-

* Middleton, it is known, had the misfortune to disbelieve the efficacy of prayer. He adduces such arguments in support of his opinion, as a reasoner so powerful in his perversity would do. Magliabechi, the most learned man of his age after Bentley, but a weak character, is unable to seize the horns of his adversary and bring him at once to the ground: yet the goodness of his cause supplies him with generous and high feeling, and his appeal to the heart of Middleton is greatly more forcible than all the subtilities in his way. He falls, as the most wary men of his church often do, into false miracles. This is requisite to the character.

ble may be questioned, and, if important, should be. We are not to tremble at the shaking of weak minds: Reason does not make them so: she, like Virtue, is debilitated by indulgences, and sickened to death by the blasts of heat and cold, blown alternately from your churches.

MAGLIABECHI.

Do you conceive God then to be indifferent to our virtues or vices, our obstinacy or repentance?

MIDDLETON.

I would not enter into such questions: and indeed I have always been slow to deliver my more serious opinions in conversation, feeling how inadequately any great subject must be discussed within such limits, and how presumptuous it would appear, in one like me, to act as if I had collected all that could be said, or even what could be said best, on the occasion. Neither to run against nor to avoid your interrogatory: there are probably those who believe that, in the expansion and improvement of our minds hereafter, they will be so sensitive to the good or evil we have done on earth, as to be rewarded or punished in the most just proportion, without any impulse given to, or suffered by, the First Cause and sole Disposer of things and of events. How rational may be this creed, I leave, with the other,

to speculative men, wishing them to recollect that unseasonable and undue heat must warp the instrument, by which alone their speculations can be becomingly and rightly made. If God is sensible to displeasure, which is a modification of pain, at the faults or vices of his creatures, he must suffer at once a myriad times more of it than any of them, and he must endure the same sufferings a myriad times longer.

MAGLIABECHI.

This hurts our common faith.

MIDDLETON.

Pass over what may offend your faith, common or private; mind only (which I am sure you will do) what may disturb the clearness of your conscience, and impede the activity of your benevolence. Let us never say openly what may make a good man unhappy or unquiet, unless it be to warn him against what we know will make him more so; for instance, if you please, a false friend; or, if you would rather, a teacher who, while he pretends to be looking over the lesson, first slips his hand into his scholar's pocket, then ties him adroitly to his chair by the coat-skirt, and, running off with his book, tells him to cry out if he dares, and promises at last, if he will not be quiet, to give him ten better; and, if he should be

hungry and thirsty, bids him never to mind that, for he will both eat his dinner for him and drink his wine, and say a Latin grace.

You tell us that you do not worship images, but that you worship in them what they express : be it so : the pagans did the same, neither better nor worse. What will you answer to the accusation of worshiping a living man? Adoration is offered undisguisedly and openly to priests and monks, however profligate and infamous their lives may have been and be. Every pope is adored by the Holy College on his elevation *.

MAGLIABECHI.

We suppose him to be the representative of Jesus Christ.

* The emperor of Austria, it is well known, had a difference with the Holy Ghost on the late election. The Holy Ghost had inspired the Holy College to elect the cardinal Della Somaglia, a most virtuous and learned man. The emperor of Austria did not approve of this inspiration, and set it aside by his *veto*. He knew that there was enough virtue in Italy already, and had declared that he wanted no more learning. In proof of the adoration of his present Holiness, the left-hand elect of the Holy Ghost, I shall transcribe the very words of the official gazette.

Si recò alla Basilica Vaticana per ricevere colà dall' altare della Tribuna l' adorazione ed ubbedienza del Sacro Collegio cò solenni riti completi.

MIDDLETON.

His legate is also his representative, and a *valet de chambre* the legate's. We may obey one man in place of another, but not adore him. The representative system is good only on this side of adoration.

MAGLIABECHI.

Prayer, at all times serviceable, may apparently on some occasions be misapplied. Father Onesimo Sozzifante, on his return from England, presented to me a singular illustration of my remark. He had resided some years in London, as chaplain to the Sardinian envoy: in the first floor of his lodginghouse dwelt Mr. Harbottle, a young clergyman, learned, of elegant manners, yet fond of fox-hunting. Inconsistencies like these are found nowhere but in your country: in others, those who have enough for one side of the character, have not enough for the opposite: you in general are sufficiently wellstored to squander much of your intellectual property, to neglect much, and to retain much.

Mutual civilities had always passed between the two ecclesiastics, and father Onesimo had received many invitations to dinner from his neighbour. After the first, he had declined them, deeming the songs and disputations in a slight degree in-

decorous. The party at this was clerical: and, altho he represented it as more turbulent in its conclusion than ours are, and altho there were many warm disputants, chiefly on jockies or leaders in parliament, he assured me he was much edified and pleased, when, at the removal of the dishes, all drank devoutly to old friendships. *I thought of you,* said he, *my dear Magliabechi, for every one had then before his eyes the complacent guide of his youth. Mine shed a few tears; at which my friends glanced one upon another and smiled; for from an Englishman not Shakespear, no, nor even the crucifix, can extort a tear.*

Onesimo was at breakfast with Mr. Harbottle, when an Italian ran breathless into the room, kissed the father's hand, and begged him to come instantly and attend a dying man. *We will go together,* said Mr. Harbottle. Following their informant, they passed through several lanes and allies, and at last mounted the stairs of a garret, in which was lying a youth, stabbed the night before by a Livornese, about one of those women who excite the most quarrels and deserve the fewest. *Leave me for a moment,* said father Sozzifante, *I must hear his confession.*

Hardly had he spoken, when out came all

whom kindness or piety or curiosity had collected, and *he is in paradise!* was the exclamation. Mr. Harbottle then entered, and was surprised to hear the worthy confessor ask of the dead man whether he forgave his enemy, and answer in another tone, *Yes, father, from my heart I pardon him.*

On returning, he remarked that it appeared strange to him. *Sir*, answered Onesimo, *the catholic church enjoins forgiveness of injuries.*

All churches enjoin the same, replied Mr. Harbottle.

He was unable to speak for himself, said the father, *and therefor I answered for him like a christian.*

Mr. Harbottle, as became him, was silent. On their return homeward they passed by a place which, if I remember, is called New-gate, a gate, above which, it appears, criminals are hanged. At that very hour the cord was around the neck of a wretch who was repeating the Lord's prayer: the first words they heard were, *Give us this day our daily bread.* The father looked at his companion with awe, spreading his fingers on his sleeve, and pressing it until he turned his face toward him. They both pushed on; but, such was the crowd, they could not pass the suppliant before he had uttered, *And lead us not into tempta-*

tion. The good father stepped before Mr. Harbottle, and, lifting his hands above his ears, would have said something; but his companion cried smartly, *I have seals to my watch, Signor Sozzifante, and there is never a fellow hanged but he makes twenty fit for it: pray walk on.*

Fairly out of the crowd, *Poor sinful soul!* said the father, *ere this time thou art in purgatory!* thy *daily bread! alas, thou hast eaten the last mouthful!* thy *temptation! thou wilt find but few there, I warrant thee, my son! Even these divine woods, Mr. Harbottle, may come a little out of season, you perceive.*

Mr. Harbottle went home dissatisfied: in about an hour a friend of his from Oxford called on him: as the weather was warm, the door standing ajar, Sozzifante heard him repeat the history of their adventure, and add: *I will be damned if in my firm persuasion the fellow is not a Jesuit: I never should have thought it: he humbugged me about the dead man, and perhaps got another hanged to quiz me. Would you believe it? he has been three good years in getting up this farce, the first I have ever caught him, and the last he shall ever catch me at.*

Father Onesimo related to me these occurrences, without a word of reproach or an accent

of illhumour. *The English is a strong language,* said he placidly, *and the people, the least deceivers in the world, are naturally the most indignant at a suspicion of deceit. Mr. Harbottle, who, I dare to say, is ripened ere this time into an exemplary and holy man, was then rather fitter for society than for the church. Do you know,* said he in my ear, altho we were alone, *I have seen him pay his laundress (and there was nothing between them) five shillings for one week only! a sum that serves any cardinal the whole winter-quarter... in April and May indeed, from one thing or other, linen wants washing oftener.*

M. Middleton, I have proved my candour, I trust, and my freedom from superstition: but he that seeks will find: and perhaps he that in obstinacy closeth his eyes long together, will open them just at the moment when he shall meet what he avoided.

I will inform you of some facts I know, shewing the efficacy of prayer to saints.

Giacomo Pastrani of Genoa, a citizen not abundant in the gifts of fortune, had however in his possession two most valuable and extremely rare things, a virtuous wife and a picture of his patron, saint Giacomo, by Leonardo. The wife had long

been ill: her malady was expensive: their substance was diminishing: still no offers had tempted him, altho many had been made, to sell the picture. At last, he refused to alienate it indeed, but in favour of a worthy priest, and only as the price of orations to the Virgin. *Who knows how many it may require?* said the holy man; *and it is difficult to make an oration which the Virgin has not heard before: perhaps fifty will hardly do. Now fifty crowns would be little for such protection.* The invalide, who heard the conversation, wept aloud. *Take it, take it,* said the husband, and wept too, lifting it from the nail, and kissing for the last time the glass that covered it. The priest made a genuflexion, and did the same. His orations prevailed; the wife recovered. The priest, hearing that the picture was very valuable, altho the master was yet uncertain, and that in Genoa there was no artist who could clean it, waited for that operation until he went to Milan. Here it was ascertained to be the work of Leonardo, and a dealer gave him four thousand crowns for it. He returned in high glee at what had happened, and communicated it to all his acquaintance. The recovered woman, on hearing it, fell sick again immediately,

d. Wishing to forget the sacrifice of her

picture, she had prayed no more to saint Giacomo; and the Virgin, we may presume, on that powerful saint's intercession, had abandoned her.

Awful fact! M. Middleton. Now mark another perhaps more so. I could overwhelm you with a crowd of witnesses.

MIDDLETON.

My dear sir, I do perceive you could.

MAGLIABECHI.

The saints in general are more vindictive than our Lady; of whose forbearance, not unaccompanied at last by chastisement, I will relate to you a memorable example. I have indeed no positive proof that my neighbour, of whom I am about to speak, had neglected his prayers to the Virgin; but, from what he certainly did, it is by no means uncharitable to suppose it. He, by this action, as you will remark, was the cause why others were constrained to omitt the salutary act of supplication as they went along.

MIDDLETON.

I am in suspense.

MAGLIABECHI.

Contiguous to my own villa, there is one belonging to Signor Anco-Marzio Natale del Poggio. At the corner of the road was inserted in the garden-wall an image of the blessed Virgin, with

the bambino in her arms. Anco-Marzio had been heard to call it, somewhat hastily, an ugly one, and to declare that he would take it down. The threat however, for several years, was not carried into execution: at last it was accomplished. Behold the consequence! Robbers climbed over the wall (would you believe it?) in the very place whence the effigy had been removed, and upon the very night too of its removal: and Anco-Marzio lost not only the whole crop of his lemons, none of which had ever been stolen in former years, but also a pair of knee-buckles, which his maid servant had taken that occasion of polishing with quick lime, and of which he deeply lamented the loss, not because a crown could scarcely have replaced them, but because they were his father's, and he had bequeathed them by his last will and testament to a very dear old friend.

No reply, no reasoning, can affect this. I know the fact: I visited the spot the next morning: I saw the broken wall: I saw the leaves of the lemon trees under the vases, without a lemon the size of a filbert on the plants. Who delayed the mad project so long? who permitted it at last? who punished it? and for what end? Never afterwards did Anco-Marzio pass an effigy of the blessed Virgin, but he kissed it again and again,

with due reverence, altho it were still wet with whitewash or paint. Every day did he renew the flowers, before the one whose tabernacle he had violated, placing them where he could bend his head over them in humble adoration, as he returned at night from his business in the city. It has indeed been suspected that he once omitted this duty; certain it is, that he once was negligent in it. He acknowledged to me that, coming home later than usual, and desirous of turning the corner and reaching the villa as soon as might be, it being dusk, he was inclined to execute his duty too perfunctoriously, and encountered, instead of the flowers, a bunch of butchers-broom. None grows thereabout. I do not insist on this: but the lemons, M. Middleton! the thieves, M. Middleton! the breach in the garden-wall, made for an irreligious purpose, and serving to punish irreligion. Well may you ponder. These things cannot occurr among you Englishmen.

MIDDLETON.

Excuse me, I pray you, my dear sir! Knowing the people of this country, my wonder was (for indeed I did wonder) that the lemons had never been stolen until that year.

MAGLIABECHI.

They never were, I do assure you, from my own knowledge, for the last thirty.

MIDDLETON.

The greater of the two miracles lies here.

MAGLIABECHI.

Of the two miracles? Astonishment and sudden terror make us oftentimes see things doubly: for my part, I declare upon my conscience, I can see but one.

MIDDLETON.

Nor I neither; to speak ingenuously.

MAGLIABECHI.

Ha! ha! I comprehend you, and perhaps have to blame my deficiency of judgement, in going a single step aside from the main subject of prayer. Now then for it: arm yourself with infidelity: chew the base metal, as boys do while they are whipt, lest they cry out.

MIDDLETON.

I am confident, from your present good humour, that the castigation you meditate to inflict on me will be lenient.

He is not commended who casts new opinions for men, but he who chimes in with old.

MAGLIABECHI.

The wisest of us, M. Middleton, cannot separate the true from the untrue in every thing.

MIDDLETON.

It required the hand of God himself, as we are informed, to divide the light from the darkness: we cannot do it; but we can profit by it. What is light we may call so; and why not what is dark?

MAGLIABECHI.

Would it fail to excite a discontent in England, if your parliament should order Christmas to be celebrated in April? Yet Joseph Scaliger, the most learned man that ever existed, and among the least likely to be led astray by theory, has proved to the satisfaction of many learned men, that the nativity of our Lord was in that month.

MIDDLETON.

As the matter is indifferent both in fact and consequences, I would let it stand. No direct or indirect gain, no unworthy end of any kind, can be obtained by its continuance: it renders men neither the more immoral nor the more dastardly: it keeps them neither the more ignorant of their duties nor the more subservient to any kind of usurpation.

MAGLIABECHI.

There may be inconveniences in an opposite direction. Pride and arrogance are not the more amiable for the coarseness of their garb. It is better to wrap up religion in a wafer, and swallow it quietly and contentedly, than to extract from it all its bitterness, make wry faces over it, and quarrel with those who decline the delicacy, and doubt the utility of the preparation. Our religion, like the vast edifices in which we celebrate it, seems dark when first entered from without: the vision accommodates itself gradually to the place; and we are soon persuaded that we see just as much as we should see.

MIDDLETON.

Be it so: but why should we admitt things for which we have no authority, and which we cannot prove? I have left unsaid a great deal of what I might have said. Not being addicted to ridicule, nor capable of sustaining a comic part, I never have spoken a word about *the bread of the angels.*

MAGLIABECHI.

God forbid you should!

MIDDLETON.

What is commonly called in this country the

bread of the angels, is known in others to be the bread of the pastry-cook. Even your own church, I imagine, will hardly insist that the bread taken by Christians here on earth, in the sacrament of the eucharist, is the ordinary or extraordinary sustinence of angels. For whatever *our* faith may be, whatever supports it may require, *theirs* is perfect and has received its fruit.

MAGLIABECHI.

This is specious; so are many of your thoughts: but as I cannot prove the fact, neither can you prove the contrary; and we both perhaps shall act wisely in considering it as a phrase of devotion.

MIDDLETON.

I should think so, if the latitude of such phrases had not presented so many fields of battle to obstinate sectaries and true believers. But let me hear the miracle with which you threatened me.

MAGLIABECHI.

My dear friend, I am now about to lay before you a fact universally known in our city, and which evinces at once the efficacy of prayer, even where it was irrational, and the consequence of neglecting it afterwards.

Angiolina Cecci, on the day before her nuptials, took the sacrament most devoutly, and im-

plored of our Florentine saint, Maria Bagnesi, to whose family she was related, her intervention for three blessings: that she might have one child only; that the *cavaliere serviente*, agreed on equally by her father and her husband, might be faithful to her; and lastly that, having beautiful hair, it never might turn grey. Now mark me. Assured of success to her suit, by a smile, as she believed, on the countenance of the saint, she neglected her prayers and diminished her alms henceforward. The moneybox, which is shaken during the celebration of mass, to recompense the priest for the performance of that holy ceremony, was shaken aloud before her day after day, and never drew a *crazia* from her pocket. She turned away her face from it, even when the collection was made to defray the arrears for the beatification of Bagnesi. Nine months after her marriage she was delivered of a female infant. I am afraid she expressed some discontent at the dispensations of Providence, for within an hour afterwards she brought forth another of the same sex. She became furious, desperate, sent the babes without seeing them, into the country, as indeed our ladies very often do; and spake slightingly and maliciously of Saint Maria Bagnesi. The consequence was a puerperal fever, which continued

several weeks, and was removed at great expense to her family, in masses, waxcandles, and processions. Pictures of the Virgin, wherever they were found by experience to be of more peculiar and more speedy efficacy, were hired at heavy charges from the convents: the Cordeliers, to punish her pride and obstinacy, would not carry theirs to the house for less than forty scudi.

She recovered; admitted her friends to converse with her; raised herself upon her pillow, and accepted some faint consolation. At last it was agreed by her physicians that she might dress herself and eat brains and liver. Probably she was ungrateful for a benefit so signal and unexpected; since no sooner did her *cameriera* comb her hair, than off it came by the handful. She then perceived her error, but, instead of repairing it, abandoned herself to anguish and lamentation. Her *cavaliere serviente*, finding her bald, meagre, and eyesore, renewed his addresses to the mother. The husband, with two daughters to provide for, the only two ever reared out of the many entrusted to those peasants, counted over again and again the dowery, shook his head, sighed piteously, and, hanging on the image of Bagnesi a silver heart of five ounces, which, knowing it to have been stolen, he bought at a cheap rate of a Jew

on Ponte Vecchio, calculated that the least of impending evils was, to purchase an additional bed just large enough for one.

You ponder, M. Middleton: you appear astonished at these visitations: you know my sincerity: you fully credit me: I cannot doubt a moment of your conviction: I perceive it marked strongly on your countenance.

MIDDLETON.

Indeed, M. Magliabechi, I now discover the validity of prayer to saints, and the danger of neglecting them. Recommend me in yours to Saint Maria Bagnesi.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.